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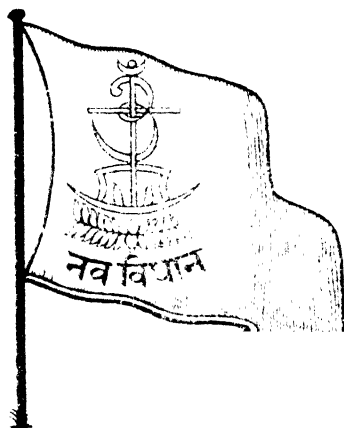
**Keshub-Centenary—Allahabad Series**

**BRAHMANANDA**

**KESHUB CHUNDER SEN**

**"Testimonies in Memoriam"**

**Vol. II**



COMPILED BY

**G. C. BANERJI**

Retired District and Sessions Judge (B. & O.)

ALLAHABAD

1937

*To be had of—*

G. C. BANERJI

Gyan Kutir, Allahabad

REV. A. K. LODH

Navavidhan Press, 3, Ramnath Mazumdar Street,  
Calcutta.

NAVAVIDHAN PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

95, Keshub Chunder Sen Street, Calcutta.

INDIAN PUBLISHING HOUSE

22/1, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta

Price : Paper Cover Rs. 1/8

Printed by D. N. Coondoo  
at the Amrita Press .  
Allahabad.

Published by G. C. Banerji  
Gyan Kutir, New Kutra  
Allahabad.







*Brahmananda*

KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

Born 19, November,  
1838.

Passed away 8, January,  
1884.

## FOREWORD

So much has already been written about the life and teachings of Keshub Chunder Sen but unfortunately so little of that material is known to the younger people of the present day, that a new volume containing appreciations of Keshub's life and work from various sources will be hailed with delight by both young and old. In view of the approaching one hundredth anniversary of Keshub's birth (November 19, 1938), a new volume of appreciations which will serve as a companion volume or a sequel to the one already published in 1934 will, it is hoped, be welcomed by Keshub's friends and others who are interested in the way of life indicated by him in Navavidhan (the New Dispensation) which is broader in its sweep than other ways of life and which shall make all nations and sects into one kingdom and family in the fulness of time. In fact, with high hopes the editor of the present volume would like to inscribe it to the coming generations of free spirits who will have faith in one God, one Family of God's children, one Law, one Scripture and one Salvation. May God hasten the advent of such a day of rejoicing, in the union of all hearts and the co-operation of all efforts for that kingdom which Keshub said will be a republic of free spirits, is the prayer of one who saw Keshub and the glory that is associated with the movement inaugurated by him.

Gyan Kutir, New Katra  
Aliahabad.

G. C. BANERJEE.

*September 1937.*



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# Chapter I

## LETTERS OF CONDOLENCE

### I. To Babu Karuna Chander Sen

*From His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief in India.*

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S OFFICE,  
Head Quarters, Camp.  
*Bangalore, 19th January, 1884.*

Dear Sir,

In acknowledging the receipt of your letter of 9th January, I am desired to convey to you an expression of Sir Donald Stewart's sympathy with you in the great loss you have sustained by the death of your father, the late Babu Keshub Chunder Sen. The loss will be widely felt in India, and must cause deep sorrow to your family circle, with whom, as with yourself, His Excellency feels genuine sympathy.

I am yours truly,  
(Sd.) E. F. CHAPMAN,  
*Military Secy. to H. E. The Commander-in-Chief.*

---

*From His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.*

BELVEDERE,  
*January 12, 1884.*

Dear Sir,

It is with very deep regret that the Lieutenant-Governor has received the news, conveyed in your letter of the 9th instant, of the death, of your father Babu Keshub Chunder Sen.

The Lieutenant-Governor's personal acquaintance with Babu Keshub Chunder Sen began only a few years ago. His Honor has always appreciated your father's great ability and the good work which, as a religious reformer, he has done among his countrymen who have in his death to deplore a great loss.

The Lieutenant-Governor wishes me to convey to you and all your family his sincere condolence in your sorrow and bereavement.

Yours faithfully,  
(Sd.) F. C. BARNES,

*Private Secretary to H. H. the  
Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.*

---

*From His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab.*

CAMP,  
Dera Ismail Khan,  
19th January, 1884.

Dear Sir,

Your letter of the 9th January 1884 was forwarded to me from Lahore by Captain Mason, R. E.

I submitted it to the Lieutenant-Governor who had already seen a telegraphic notice of the sad occurrence in the newspapers.

His Honor has desired me to express to you his deepest sympathy with yourself and the family in their present bereavement and his sense of the great loss the country has sustained by the death of such a man.

His Honor has further desired me to state that by this mournful event not only has the country lost a devoted servant but he himself a friend.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Sincerely Yours.

(Sd.) J. R. DUNLOP SMITH, LT.,

*Private Secretary to H. H. the Lieutenant-  
Governor of Punjab.*

---

*From H. H. the Maharajah Gaekwar of Baroda.*

MOTIBAUGH, BARODA.

*17th January, 1884.*

Dear Sir,

I am commanded by His Highness the Maharaja Sahib Sena Khas Khel Sumsher Bahadur to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 10th instant conveying the sad news of your distinguished father. When at Calcutta last year, His Highness had an opportunity of making Babu Keshub's acquaintance, and from what His Highness saw of him there and had heard previously, His Highness feels the death of so remarkable a man to be a great loss.

Let me add an expression of my own sincere regret for the loss of one for whom I had always entertained respect.

Believe me,

Yours truly,

(Sd.) V. M. SAMARTH,

*Secretary to H. H. the Maharajah.*

---

*From H. H. The Maharajah of Travancore.*

TREVANDRUM,  
*January 17, 1884.*

Dear Sir,

The news of the lamented death of your most worthy father reached me several days before your letter. If I had known you before I would have long before this conveyed my sincere sympathy.

I consider your father's death a loss over which India and the whole civilized world may well mourn. Since the great Ram Mohun Roy no native of India earned a name so high as your late father for nobleness of purpose, unflagging zeal and perseverance, great ability and self-sacrificing philanthropy. You and future generations in your family may well be proud of such a man.

May the Heavenly Father comfort you in your great trial.

I am,  
Yours very sincerely,  
(Sd.) RAMA VARMA, MAHARAJA.

---

*From the Maharajah of Bhinga.*

BHINGA, OUDH,  
*17th January, 1884.*

My dear Babuji,

The sad intelligence of your father's death which you have conveyed to me in your letter of the 17th I had already learnt, with the deepest sorrow, through the papers—but the intelligence came upon me with a

sudden shock, for I had scarcely heard of his sickness when I heard of its melancholy close. As one whom I valued as a personal friend I mourn his loss, and as a great man who has gone from amongst us to the happy and unknown land, I deplore his untimely death. I pray God will give you and your dear ones strength to bear the weight of this hand of affliction—and when the first bitterness of your sorrow shall have passed off you will have the satisfaction of knowing that your lamented father died possessing the high esteem of his countrymen and of Europeans alike.

Hoping to hear from you occasionally.

With kind regards

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

(Sd.) ODAY PERTAP SINGH,  
*of Bhinga.*

---

*From Sir T. Madava Row.*

MADRAS,

*January 22, 1884.*

My Dear Sir,

Your letter of the 10th instant came to hand in due course.

I need not say with what deep regret I heard of the death of your esteemed father Babu Kesuv Chunder Sen. I have thus lost a most valued friend. Our community has lost a warm well-wisher. And all India has lost a highly respected leader of religious thought.



The loss will be felt widely and long. Accept, please, the expression of my heart-felt sympathy on this sad occasion, and

Believe me,  
Yours sincerely,  
(Sd.) T. MADAVA ROW.

---

*From Maharajah Joteendra Mohun Tagore.*

*January 10, 1884.*

My Dear Sir,

Accept my most sincere condolence for the bereavement with which it has pleased Heaven to afflict your house. A most remarkable man has passed away from among us, and it is my firm conviction that we shall not find the like of him soon.

If sorrow shared is sorrow soothed, you have the consolation that the whole community shares in your grief, for all India mourns the loss of one who was great in his goodness and great in his worth.

Again expressing my warmest sympathy with you, I remain

Yours very truly,  
(Sd.) JOTEENDRA MOHUN TAGORE.

---

*From Maharajah Kamal Krishna Deb Bahadur.*

SHOBABAZAR RAJBARIE,  
*Calcutta, 12th Jan. 1884.*

My Dear Karuna Chandra,—

I am in receipt of your two mourning letters, one in Bengallee and the other in English, the last of which

is dated the 10th instant, and read them with feelings of deep sorrow. I sincerely sympathise with you on your sad paternal bereavement. Your late father was an ornament of our country and by his premature death there has been a vacuum which is scarcely expected to be soon filled up. It is more to be regretted that he has been carried away in the bloom of his life which is a matter of the deepest grief to me and to our countrymen. I wish you would follow the noble example of your late illustrious father in the path of virtue, and may kind Heaven help you.

For generations your family has been linked in ties of friendship with ours. In the death of poor Keshub Chunder Sen I deeply mourn that I have lost one of my best children and not a distinguished countryman only. I trust you will be able to bear your father's loss with resignation to the will of the Almighty God, and do something to alleviate the sorrows of your family, relatives and friends.

I remain,  
My Dear Karuna Chunder,  
Your affectionate friend and well-wisher,  
(Sd.) KOMUL KRISHNA.

---

*From the Hon'ble Kristodas Pal.*

*Tuesday night, January 8th, 1884.*

My Dear Sir,—I cannot adequately express my grief at the sad news of the death of your illustrious father. All India mourns the irreparable loss !

Nothing that I can say can console you or the other members of your family. I will not, therefore, attempt it. The consolation must come from the Most High !

But sorrow shared is sorrow soothed, and in this belief I offer you and the rest of your family my sincere sympathy. Need I say that I have lost in your lamented father a dear and esteemed friend.

I regret much that owing to previous engagements I could not pay my last tribute of respect to his remains by following the funeral procession.

Yours sincerely,  
(Sd.) KRISTODAS PAUL.

---

*From the Hon'ble Mr. Gibbs.*

52-2 PARK STREET,  
January 11, 1884.

My Dear Sir,

I can assure you that I saw the announcement of your respected father's death with very severe regret. I have for years taken great interest in the religious movement of which he was the head, and was greatly pleased to make his personal acquaintance last year. I thank you for your note and beg to tender to you, your mother and family, my sincere sympathy at the great loss you have sustained.

Believe me,  
Yours sincerely,  
(Sd.) J. GIBBS.

---

*From Rev. R. Edward.*

SAUGOR.

*January 19, 1884.*

Dear Karuna Chunder Sen,

I saw in the newspaper the announcement of your father's death and I read it with very sincere regret.

I cannot say, however, that I was unprepared for it, for when I visited him a few days before leaving Calcutta I was much impressed with the seriousness of his condition and I could not help feeling that it was very doubtful whether I should see him again.

I sympathise with you and your family, and indeed I am conscious that he is a great loss to all. The results of his life must, I am sure, be felt by the generations to come. It was always a pleasure to me to talk with him, and it is a satisfaction to me to have seen him in his last illness. I shall always remember our conversation on that occasion ; it was mainly on the subject of the sanctifying influences of suffering.

May you and all of us be led to a full knowledge of the Truth as God would have us known it in Jesus Christ, and

Believe me to be,

Yours faithfully,

(Sd.) R. EDWARD.

---

*From F. R. Hogg, Esq.*

6, MIDDLETON ROW;

*Calcutta, 11th January, 1884.*

My Dear Sir,

I have to thank you for your letter of the 9th January announcing the sad news of the death of your father.

For Babu Keshub Chunder Sen I entertained a feeling of public admiration and private friendship and esteem. His loss to the country would always be great and is especially so at the present time of public tension of feeling. For his influence was large, as one whom both Europeans and Natives respected and admired. His annual lecture too was one of the events of the year in Calcutta at this season. Feeling much as I do the death of this remarkable man, I can in some measure sympathise with you and the members of your family in the great sorrow which you must all now be enduring.

Believe me,  
Yours truly,  
(Sd.) F. R. HOGG.

---

*A Message of Condolence from Gracious Majesty.*

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

*Barrackpore, 13th January, 1881*

Sir,

I have this morning received from the Secretary of State a telegram informing me that your telegram to Sir Henry Ponsonby, announcing the death of your father, has been laid before the Queen-Empress, and that Her Majesty has desired that I should convey to you an expression of the regret with which she has received the news, and of her condolence with your family in the loss you have sustained. I doubt not that this proof of Her Majesty's gracious interest and

sympathy will be highly appreciated by you and the other members of the family.

I am, Sir,  
Yours faithfully,  
(Sd.) RIPON.

---

*Letter of Condolence from Lord Ripon, then the  
Viceroy and Governor-General of India*

GOVERNMENT HOUSE.

*Calcutta, January 10, 1884.*

Dear Sir,

I have shewn your letter of yesterday's date to Lord Ripon who desires me to inform you that he has received with great regret the intelligence of the death of your father. His Excellency did not know him intimately, but he had met him on several occasions, and found his conversation full of interest. He feels that the loss of such remarkable a man, will be felt throughout India.

Allow me to add an expression of my own regret and sympathy with you in the loss you have sustained and

Believe me,  
Yours faithfully,  
(Sd.) H. W. PRIMROSE.

---

*Condolence from the Executive Committee of the  
United Kingdom Alliance.*

That the Executive Committee of the United Kingdom Alliance very deeply lament the decease of Babu

Keshub Chunder Sen the leader of the 'Brahmo Somaj' of India, and very greatly esteemed as an enlightened and earnest Temperance Reformer, who had rendered great service to the Alliance by his noble and eloquent utterances on various occasions, including his magnificent speech at the great meeting in St. James Hall, London, at the time of his visit to England.

"That the Executive record their sincere condolence with the family and many personal friends of the deceased in the great bereavement they are suffering through this mournful event."

---

*From Lord Northbrook, Viceroy and Governor-General  
of India in 1872.*

ADMIRALTY, S. W.  
*February 8th, 1884.*

My Dear Sir,

Before I received the letter which you were so good as to write to me it was my intention to convey to the family of my friend Babu Keshub Chunder Sen the expression of my very sincere sympathy.

I entertained a feeling of cordial esteem for your father and of admiration for his remarkable powers. His life was spent in working for the welfare of his fellow-countrymen, and with great success. I feel sure that his premature loss will be widely and deeply felt.

Believe me to be yours faithfully,  
(Sd.) NORTHBROOK.

---

*From His Excellency Lord Lytton, late Viceroy and  
Governor-General of India.*

17, HILL STREET,  
16th February, 1884.

Sir,

I thank you sincerely for your obliging letter of the 14th of January last.

It was with true regret that I learned from the newspapers of the death of your lamented father. For that sad intelligence I was wholly unprepared ; for I had not even been aware that he was out of health and he has passed from us at an age which seemed to promise many years of continued activity to his illustrious and beneficent life. Death, the common lot of all, assumes an exceptional character in the case of exceptional men ; and "that is not a common chance that takes a noble life away." But, though I am well aware that it can be no mitigation of your own irreparable bereavement to know how widely it is mourned by others, allow me to assure you that my respect for the memory of your father greatly enhances my sympathy with the sorrow of his son. And in this assurance believe me,

Yours very truly,

(Sd.) LYTTON.

---

*From Sir W. Muir.*

INDIA OFFICE,  
WESTMINSTER, S. W.  
9th February, 1884.

My Dear Sir,

I have received with profound regret the announcement of my friend, Keshub Chunder Sen's decease. I



had a sincere regard and reverence for him; and more than once he has discoursed with me in much freedom on the deep things that belonged to his faith. Since then, I have, from time to time, heard from him, and have read and appreciated his wonderful testimonies to the faith of Jesus Christ. Into that faith I longed that he should have entered with entire simplicity. Yet I am deeply thankful for what he has done and said, and mourn over his premature loss.

Lady Muir joins me in offering to his widow and all the members of the family an expression of deep sympathy in their loss.

I remain,

Yours most sincerely,

(Sd.) W. MUIR.

---

*From Sir Arthur Hobhouse*

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE,

*9th February, 1881.*

My Dear Sir,

I have to thank you for your letter of the 14th ultimo in which you tell me in feeling terms of the sad events which I had previously only learned by public telegram. Your father filled such a space in the public eye and mind as to make his departure long and sensibly felt. I shall always feel it a pleasure to have made his acquaintance, and a privilege to have enjoyed his friendship. This loss to his own family circle must be irreparable, but those who stand outside that circle are incapable of estimating it; and a reverent silence and sympathy become them best.

Please receive, and convey to others the kindly respect of myself and of Lady Hobhouse who knew your father well and esteemed him much, and believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

(Sd.) ARTHUR HOBHOUSE.

---

*From Professor F. Max Muller*

OXFORD,

*9th February, 1884.*

My Dear Sir,

Many thanks for your letter. I knew of your father's death, and I have felt it as a personal loss. I not only honoured your father, but I loved him, and I count his friendship as one of the most valued recollections of my life. My thoughts so often turn to India and dwell with the few men I know there, (I mean the few who are really doing good work there) that even now I seem to hold some spiritual converse with your father, till I suddenly feel reminded that he is no longer among the living. India has suffered a great loss, but so has Europe, for your father's work was telling on the minds of many people in Europe as well as in India. We cannot fathom the depth of the Divine Wisdom, least of all in the choice of those who are called away from their work on earth, where they seem to be most useful. Your father was still so young, his mind so vigorous! I expected so much from him still—and now his place is left empty—and who is to fill it? However he has done a great work—a work that will never die—and that thought must have been a comfort to him in

his last hours. It must be a comfort to you also, and to all who were dearest to him. Your father still lives in the work which he has left done and undone. I hope there will be no lack of disciples willing to carry on his work, and to keep his noble spirit alive in India.

I wrote a short obituary notice of your father in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and sent you a copy. I hope it has reached. I should like to give a fuller account of his noble work and life, but I must wait till I have a little more leisure, also, till I can get fuller materials.

With truest sympathy,

Yours faithfully,

(Sd) F. MAX MULLER.

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## II. To Mrs. Keshub Chunder Sen

*From Rev. James C. Street.*

50, ULSTERVILLE HOUSE,

BELFAST.

*January 23rd, 1884.*

Dear Madam,

Permit me on my own behalf and on behalf of the Church of the second congregation, Belfast, of which I am minister, to extend to you our deep and respectful sympathy in the irreparable loss you have sustained in the death of your distinguished and noble husband. To you the sorrow will be overwhelming, and your life will be unspeakably saddened, though you will, the sustaining comfort that the life which is now ended on earth has been blessed to thousands of men and women, who by his purity, inspiration and greatness of character

and spiritual endowment have been quickened, ennobled and brought nearer to the life of God.

When Mr. Mozoomdar was here, and was a guest in my house, we had much delightful intercourse respecting your distinguished husband, and bore our united testimony to his great works and the splendour of the work he was doing for the enlightenment and welfare of the world, little did we then dream that the lips accustomed to utter such inspiring truths and exalted principles would so soon close in death. But God moves in his own mysterious way and we all bow down in remorse before His supreme will.

You, however, and we cannot help but be comforted with the thought that God's prophets and saints live after death, and their works and aims go on prospering and to prayer, so will it be with your great husband, his work will continue to grow and millions will bless his name.

May God comfort, sustain and bless you is the earnest prayer of

Yours sincerely,

JAMES C. STREET,

*Minister of second Church,*

*Belfast, Ireland.*

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*From Mary Keating*

38, LONGHBORO' PARK,

BRIXTON—LONDON.

*20th January, 1884.*

Dear and Honoured Madam,

Our representative Society is sending you its vote of condolence in true and sympathetic words, and a letter

numerously signed is expressing on behalf of many Englishmen and women, their sincere and heartfelt sorrow for your bereavement and yet I feel there will be still something unsaid by those who like myself, feel more than common sorrow or regret at the passing away of one to whom they owe so much as your beloved husband, Keshub Chunder Sen. When in England, dear lady, I, and my family had the honour of his most esteemed friendship, and gratefully do we recall the many happy hours spent in his society—listening to his eloquent public appeals, and sharing the enthusiasm which his dignified presence everywhere created or more precious still to us, having the privilege of daily familiar intercourse, and finding him everywhere and at all times the same gentle, earnest, loving teacher ! The few months' visit of fourteen years ago stand fresh in our memory as an insight into one of the best and purest lives.

Thankfully also, do we acknowledge that it was *he*, "*India's greatest son*" who first awakened in us any real interest in your dear country—up to that time the affairs and people of India seemed too far off, to claim any special attention from private individuals like ourselves, but ever after hearing his fervid eloquence on behalf of his country, his earnest appeals for justice to her—religiously, socially and politically—we have felt a thrill of enthusiasm for all affecting India's welfare and to this day are warmly interested in every Indian question.

There are many, dear lady, who would echo all that I can but feebly express of love and reverence for the

valuable life thus early lost to us here, and offer to yourself and family, heartfelt sympathy and compassion in your bereavement, but the influence of so pure and noble a spirit is *abiding*, and the work his master-mind had organised *must* and *will* go on—God in His own good time bringing all things to perfection. Let us then take hope and comfort from the memory of one so beloved, and in emulating his pure, self-sacrificing life, help on the work of regenerating not India only but the whole world !

With profound esteem and true sympathy,

I beg to remain,

Dear Madam,

Sincerely and affectionately yours,

(S.J.) MARY KEATING.

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*From Stephen S. Tayler, Esq.*

151, BRIXTON ROAD, S. W.

*21st January, 1884.*

Dear Mrs. Sen,

I venture respectfully to offer my tribute of sympathy and respect to you and your family on the occasion of the severe affliction which you are called upon to bear at this time by the Heavenly Father.

It was a great privilege to me to have had the opportunity of meeting with Mr. Sen here in my house when he was in this country.

The charm and sweetness of his disposition, the spiritual power of his utterances and the pleasant and

noble aspect of his countenance stirred me with a deeper sense of the possible excellence of the human race than I ever remember before.

We are therefore deeply touched with a sense of the bereavement that has fallen upon you—and gladly contribute our word of sympathy, and would do our best to help to soften your pillow of affliction and cheer you with a few earnest assurances of the real permanence of the good.

Yours faithfully,

(Sd.) STEPHEN S. TAYLER.

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*From Rev. R. Spears.*

22, GASCOYNE ROAD,  
VICTORIA PARK, LONDON, E.

*March 19th, 1884.*

Dear Mrs. Sen,

I have this day handed to the Globe Parcels Express a box addressed to you containing an engrossed expression of sympathy from nearly 500 ladies and gentlemen of England, Scotland, Ireland, and a few from America. Many of these are ministers, professors and distinguished scholars of all Churches. The name of Max Muller you will find among them. An intimation, in the *Christian Life* that I was about to send the expression of sympathy, brought the name. The document has been neatly framed. In some cases where your dear husband was well known all the members of the family begged leave to have their names sent. The rule was

to have only two names. I have seen that all charges for its conveyance to you have been paid, and so it will be delivered *free*. I may add once more, the profound interest we took in all Mr. Sen's movements and how deeply grieved we were at his death.

May God bless you and yours evermore, and may we all meet in that happy realm and be united again when death can no more make these sad separations. My wife joins with me in these few words.

Very sincerely yours,

(Sd.) R. SPEARS.

*Supplementary letter of Rev. R. Spears' expression of sympathy to the widow and family of  
Keshub Chunder Sen.*

Dear Mrs. Sen,

Remembering the disinterested and noble efforts of your husband to elevate and bless the people of India we join together, at this sad moment of your bereavement in an expression of sympathy to you and your family on the great loss you are called to bear ; and we pray that He who has promised to be a Father to the Fatherless and a Husband to the widow may comfort and sustain you all, now and for evermore.

I. Adair	G. F. Armistead	R. B. Apperson
I. Alexander	A. Arnold	M. Ball
I. Allen	M. Atkinson	I. Bagshaw
M. Anderson	I. Atkinson	C. H. Bauford
I. Anderson	H. Austin	D. Bartlett
E. Andrews	G. L. Apperson	G. Batchelor



F. Bennet	S. Charlesworth	M. Cross
R. Blackburn	M. Charlesworth	I. Cross
L. E. Bond	R. D. Charlton	H. R. Darlison
A. Browett	F. A. Child	E. J. Darlison
I. Browett	F. C. Clark	S. Davies
E. H. Ballard	M. A. Clarke	M. E. Davies
A. Bourne	I. Clarke	W. Davis
A. Brabner	I. Clay	S. Davis
I. Bradley	M. Clay	E. DeLaporte
M. Bradley	F. Clay	A. V. DeLaporte
M. Bramley	E. Cleland	R. Dawson
I. A. Brinkworth	I. Christie	A. Dean
I. Broadbent	I. I. Clephan	I. Dean
E. Brookes	E. Clephan	S. Debenham
E. G. Brown	I. H. Cliff	A. Debenham
N. Burge	E. Coe	A. Denning
W. Burton	N. Coleman	A. Dimons
M. Burton	W. Colsell	W. Dorling
E. R. Butler	I. Colvin	S. Dundee
W. G. Cadman	M. Colvin	W. Duplock
E. Cannon	M. I. Cook	H. Eade
T. D. Carpenter	R. Cook	E. M. Earp
I. E. Carpenter	I. D. Conyers	R. E. Edwards
A. M. Carpenter	O. Cornish	A. & M. Elliott
W. Caryne	H. Cousins	T. H. Elliott
H. Castle	E. Cousins	T. R. Elliott
W. H. Channing	A. B. Cock	W. Elliott
I. M. Channing	C. Cowan	I. Ellis
F. A. Channing	Miss Craven	M. E. Else
B. M. Channing	E. Crootes	E. Evans

M. Evans	F. J. Greenfield	E. Hind
T. Evans	T. H. Gregg	E. M. Hodgetts
R. Evans	A. Grigg	G. Hollamby
J. H. Every	A. Grinold	M. Hollamby
J. Every	I. I. Gunge	J. Hopgood
G. Failes Le Pla	E. P. Hall	N. Hood
S. Farquhar	E. Hall	A. Hood
W. Fielding	I. Hall	W. S. Houghton
J. H. Filchie	E. C. Hall	F. Houghton
W. Ford	M. Hall	E. Honston
G. Fox	T. Hailing	G. Hulls
I. Fox	W. Hailing	G. R. Humphery
M. Fox	I. Hamilton	I. Hunter
W. Galpin	E. Harding	M. Hunter
H. I. Galpin	A. I. Harding	M. Hutchinson
S. T. Galpin	C. Harding	P. Hutchinson
T. S. Garriock	W. Harker	Miss Hutchinson
E. Gault	G. Harris	H. Jeffery
W. Gault	E. Harrowin	H. Jelly
J. Gault	I. Harrowin	C. Jacks
J. Gelineer	H. Harsent	W. John
T. E. Gillard	W. J. Harson	E. Jolly
M. Gillespie	J. A. Haswell	O. J. Jones
W. Glossop	H. Hawkes	T. L. Jones
F. & A. E. Glover	M. Hemingway	I. S. Jones
I. A. Goode	A. B. Henry	R. I. Jones
S. Greenway	M. Herbert	R. Keating
W. & A. Greaves	R. F. Higgins	M. Keating
I. Greenfield	H. Hilding	A. R. Keating
F. W. Greenfield	T. Hill	E. I. N. Keating

R. A. Keating	F. M'Cammon	I. & E. Moore
I. Kodwords	I. M'Caw	H. Moore
A. Keeling	D. Maginnis	I. Morgan
I. A. Kelly	H. A. McGowan	W. Morrow
I. Kerby	E. & Mrs. Marsh	F. Morley
R. Kitching	D. Macrae	E. Myers
A. Konon	E. Maebv	L. M. Myers
E. Laird	I. I. Marten	F. Max Muller
I. Land	S. Mason	F. Nettlefold
M. W. Lambert	M. Martineau	W. Noel
M. Lambert	D. Martineau	I. Nelson
W. F. Landon	L. Mason	W. Noddall
E. Lane	A. E. Marshall	M. Noddall
A. Lansdowne	H. Mason	I. Oakeshott
E. Lansdowne	G. Mason	T. B. Oliver
F. Lansdowne	I. Mason	I. K. Ovambo
G. Lansdowne	W. Mason	M. C. Osborne
E. Lawrence	W. Mattocks	E. Osborne
H. LeBreton	D. Matts	I. Osborne
E. Lee	H. Matts	L. Oman
D. Lister	S. H. Matts	I. Owen
E. W. Lloyd	F. E. Millard	S. Owen
I. Longdon	H. Minnitt	W. Parker
M. Longdon	I. Minnitt	I. T. Parker
E. Lucas	A. I. Minster	W. Parry
I. Lynn	I. Miskimmin	A. S. Patten
A. Madocks	I. C. & E. Mitchell	I. Payne
A. F. Macdonald	G. Mitchell	H. Payton
I. T. Mackey	I. K. Montgomery	C. Peach
R. E. B. Maclellan	H. Moore	W. Phillips

D. Phillips	A. Robertson	L. J. Smith
I. M. Pilkington	I. Robinson	M. C. Smith
W. Plimpton	P. Robson	W. Spackman
G. Pool	E. Robson	R. Spears
E. Pond	F. H. Rogers	E. Spears
F. C. Pond	Y. De Rome	T. P. Spedding
W. E. Pond	H. Y. Rowland	H. Stanshald
K. A. Ponder	K. M. Rowland	M. Stannus
E. Ponder	H. K. Rudd	H. Stannus
L. Pope	M. H. Rutt	A. W. Stannus
A. Potter	I. Saint	J. Steadman
A. Poulton	I. W. Saint	I. E. Stephens
T. Prime	M. Saunders	T. Stevenson
P. Prime	E. Saunders	J. Stoate
E. Prime	Y. Sear	M. Stoate
L. Prime	T. H. M. Scott	J. S. Stone
A. Pumpher	M. Serwenel	E. Sulley
I. Pyott	W. Serwenel	F. Summers
M. Pyott	G. Sexton	I. & E. Sundell
F. Radley	J. Shelley	J. T. Sunderland
I. Ramsden	E. Shelley	W. E. Sunpner
G. Rayne	W. Simms	J. & E. Tapp
F. Y. Reed	M. Simmonds	E. E. Taylor
D. Rees	G. W. Skinner	N. M. Taylor
W. Rex	J. G. Slater	H. S. Taylor
G. Ride	G. J. Slipper	M. Taylor
T. Rix	C. M. Smith	J. Taylor
C. D. Rix	J. D. Smith	J. Tebb
I. Robberds	E. Smith	M. Tester
W. Roberts	J. Smith	L. Tester

F. Thomas	C. Walbey	H. Williamson
J. Thomas	W. Walker	J. A. Willmetts
T. Thomas	D. Walton	S. Willmetts
D. Thompson	G. Wamock	J. Wilson
M. Tiffin	H. Warwick	R. Wilson
C. S. Tinney	H. J. Wastie	M. Wilson
J. Tinney	R. Waterall	M. A. Wilson
T. Towers	T. N. Waterhouse	M. Withall
J. S. Tovey	H. Watson	L. Withers
A. Turner	T. Weatherley	E. Withers
J. J. Turner	A. Webster	W. Withers
E. J. Turner	C. R. Welch	A. Wood
R. Turner	J. Willings	G. S. Wood
C. W. Tweed	M. Willings	E. Woodside
E. Tweed	E. E. G. Wench	M. J. Woodside
G. R. Twinn	M. West	C. Woollen
N. M. Tyler	E. West	J. Woolley
H. W. Tyndall	S. D. West	R. Woolley
C. B. Upton	R. Wheatley	J. Wartlington
R. W. Waddell	M. Wheatley	M. D. Wright
W. Waid	E. Whitelead	E. Wright
R. D. Walbey	W. Whitecliff	J. Wright

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### III. To The Rev. P. C. Mozumdar

CONDOLENCE FROM SWITZERLAND

*(Professor Kesselring of Zurich writes to  
Mr. Mozoomdar.)*

Dear Sir,

We beg to express our deep-felt condolence on the death of the great founder of your Church, Mr. Keshub Chunder Sen. For many years we have followed the religious movement of the Brahmo Somaj with warm interest and with the feeling of a deep spiritual affinity. Many times our minds have been enlightened and edified by the deep truths and the lofty enthusiasm of Mr. Sen's lectures and discourses, and seized by the pious effusions of his heart. Also in those times when he had to undergo severe attacks and heavy trials, and when we ourselves were not able to approve all his proceedings and doctrines we have not for a moment doubted the purity of his intentions : and we have never ceased to see in him one of greatest sons of India, and elect leader of his people to religious and moral regeneration. Now he has entered into peace, summoned home by the Lord whom he has faithfully served. His name will never be forgotten among his countrymen and in whole mankind. Mr. Sen has, in particular, enjoyed manifold and lively sympathies among the liberal Christian theologians of Germany and Switzerland. His deep ideal understanding of the Christian religion, his fervency of mind, together with the full liberty of his judgment in respect to the traditional forms of ecclesiastic doctrine and worship, rendered him akin to German theology

which always tended to a freer movement than official English theology. We fully understand why he would not accept the name of a Christian, though he was so often urged to do so. He saw the Christians divided among themselves; he was aware that many of the so-called Christian traditions were not in accordance with the primitive Gospel of Jesus and with truth itself; he was persuaded that religious truth could not be confined exclusively to this name and to this community, and he therefore lovingly acknowledged all elements of truth, dispersed in all religions, and particularly in the religious and philosophical traditions of his own country, though the true spirit of the gospel was the very centre of his religious ideas. We ourselves are Christians in true conviction. But to us, too, it is a necessity to believe that God has not left his truth without witness in any part of mankind; and we acknowledge, in particular, in the sacred traditions of the Hindus many deep, religious and moral truths. We believe that a good deal of what we used to call Christian truth, is known and practised also beyond the limits of Christianity among men of serious spiritual religiosity. We are persuaded that in its essence, all truth is one, though the degrees in which, and the sides from which it is seized, and the terms which it is proclaimed, may widely differ.

Christianity in its perfection, which however is nowhere fully realized in any of its followers, and often sadly discredited by the conduct of mere name-Christians, includes the essential truth of all other religions; but the other religions tend to the same final end, and will

reach it, when developed to the full perfection of their ideal aspirations. We do not believe Christianity to have been revealed in a miraculously supernatural way, wholly different from the origin of other religions. Jesus is, to us, not an extraneous superhuman being, but rather the man united with God, in whose mind the destination of every man, full filial union with God and full brotherly love to all men, was realized powerfully and purely, and whose word and spirit are the most efficacious agents for awakening mankind to the consciousness and the successive realization of this same destination.

We are glad to hope, that our spiritual communion with Mr. Sen will not be extinguished with his death. You, dear sir, have long been known to us as a distinguished representative of the same religious convictions, and we confidently hope that you will prove a strong support to the orphan church of the New Dispensation. As you have, in the last year, personally fastened the friendly relations of your Church with the Theists of England and America, so we hope that you will not decline an epistolary intercourse with the Theists of Germany and Switzerland, who for a long time have been spiritually connected with your movement. On our side the conditions of a really beneficial exchange between you and us are more favorable than ever, since the foundation of our new *General Protestant Mission Society*. The aim of this Society is not to make converts for Christian name and the Christian ecclesiastical forms, but to promote the mutual brotherly intelligence of the children of God scattered over the world, and the



exchange of all their spiritual goods, and so humbly to co-operate for that final time of light and love, when all mankind shall be united in the kingdom of the Heavenly Father. In the name of this society a circular letter has been sent to the different branches of the Brahmo Somaj in the beginning of this year. The copy for the Church of the New Dispensation has been addressed to Mr. Keshub Chunder Sen, alas only some days before his death. As we don't know, if nevertheless this copy has come to the right hands, we send you another copy of this letter. We should be happy to receive an answer, and doubly thankful, if this answer could arrive in Europe till June 4th, as on that and the following day the anniversary meeting of our society will take place at Weimar (in Germany). Please direct eventually to Professor Kesselring, Zurich, Switzerland, or, for the days of the anniversary, Prof. Kesselring of Zurich, Poste Restante, Weimar, Germany.

We remain for ever,

Dear Sir,

Your loving brethren in God,

(Sd.) Professor KESSELRING,

*Member of the General Committee of  
The General Prot. Miss. Society*

(Sig.) REV. W. SPINNER,

*Member of the Committee of  
The Swiss Branch of the Society.*

P.S.—In conclusion, we beg you to excuse the imperfection of our English. \* \* \* \*

## SYMPATHY FROM SOUTH AFRICA.

(*Rev. Maurice Davies, of Canon Grahamstown, wrote during the life-time of Keshub.*)

I am now Canon of the Cathedral here ; and have just read in the *Contemporary Review* for October, Dr. Knighton's paper on "The New Dispensation." I feel that it is for this that I have been hoping all my life—now of more than fifty years' duration. Will you put me in a position to announce particulars of this grand scheme to the large congregation amongst whom I minister here ? I hope at once to preach on Dr. Knighton's article ; but it will be a long while before this letter reaches you, and I shall be able to recur to the subject when I hear from you again, especially after I have once interested my people in it. Before your magnificent conception all else seems dwarfed and stunted. Surely it would be well if preachers of position and influence *inside* the different systems you seek to fuse could be got to bring the subject before their congregations. I see no other means of confronting materialism than by some such union of *all* spiritual believers. Pray put me in a position to speak more particularly of the "New Dispensation."

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*Rev. E. L. Rexford of America,  
congratulating Minister Keshub wrote to say :—*

Will you permit me to send you my word of cordial greeting from this distant land, and my hearty thanksgiving for the noble thoughts you are sending out to the world in the name of religion. Your noble address at

Calcutta (" We Apostles of the New Dispensation ") reached a great number of American readers through the New York *Independent*, and I am so impressed with the essential truth of its principles that I cannot forbear telling you of my joy that such a message in this day is sent to us from the orient, which has spoken so many times before to the world. It seems to me that you announce the essential law of Christianity, which has been concealed under a mass of ignorant and unappreciative interpretations. I am not at all particular about its being the law of Christianity. It is the law of a real and true *religion*, and I glory in it and thank you. I have been much interested in your movement, especially since the period of your visit to England, and I wish you *God-speed*."

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THE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE M. G. RANADE  
AND DR. R. G. BHANDARKAR, LL.D.

*Their Letter of Condolence and Sympathy.*

FRARTHANA SOMAJ MANDIR.

Poona, 25th January, 1884.

To—Bhai Pratap Chandra Mozumdar and the other missionary Brothers of the Brahmo Somaj of India.

Brethren in faith and love,

The news of the untimely death of Bhai Keshub Chunder Sen, the Minister and Leader of the Brahmo Church, was received by us all with inexpressible feelings of sorrow and dismay. We can well imagine from our own feelings the intensity of the shock which this sudden

bereavement must have given to you, who were his fellow-workers and friends, closely connected with him by life-long association in the great work which was so dear to his heart. Some of us were privileged to know the deceased minister personally, and many of us had seen him when he came to these parts in the course of his missionary tours. All of us have learnt to admire him, and have been in spiritual fellowship with him for many years through the magic influence of his published writings, and his eloquent discourses on the most sacred topics of our common faith. Gifted as he was with rare spiritual powers, disciplined by a long course of meditation and prayer, we always looked up to him as a fountain of elevating religious ideas—as a teacher from whom it was a privilege to learn—as an eloquent preacher whose word melted the most obdurate heart—as a reformer who worthily carried on the work so nobly begun by the founder of our Church, Rajah Ram Mohan Roy—as a *Sadhu* who profited by the example and teachings of the venerable *Pradhana Acharya* Devendra Nath Tagore, and endeavoured to bring about the union of devotion and duty, science and faith, life and eternity, the divine and the human—as a *Bhakta* who realized the flow and warmth of Love and Trust in Providence in a way to keep alive the traditions of our *Vaishnav* Saints—as a religious leader who reconciled in spirit and essence the law and the teachings of the East and the West, so as to give place to all in their great excellences in our Church. The loss of such a man would have been felt to be great and irreparable at any time, but at the present moment

his departure from our midst in the full career of usefulness and service which God had marked out for him, before his race was run, and his life's work was fully accomplished, is well calculated to fill us all with dismay as a national calamity. We console ourselves however with the reflection which will occur to you also, that under the Divine Providence which has so wonderfully guided the destinies of our Church and whose finger can be legibly traced through all the past history of the development of religious faith throughout all times and in all countries, even this great bereavement will be a source of strength and elevation, and must have been intended as a discipline and tribulation for holy ends. Prophets and religious teachers have ere this been permitted to tread upon the earth and sojourn here below for still more brief periods, and their untimely death has been the precursor of a glorious resurrection of the higher spiritual life that animated them in the body. He lived sufficiently long to breathe new life and warmth in the cold systems and stiff forms of old established religions and to communicate his zeal to a body of faithful apostles on whom his great mantle will now descend. May you be worthy of this call ! May you hold up high on earth the banner of our Church, and strive as the pioneers and leaders in the great struggle with evil and sin, against which the minister waged a life-long war, and to whose forces he did not succumb even in death ! May you propagate the Faith with the fervour of ancient *Rishis* and *Acharyas* ! May you be the instruments in God's hands of closing all strifes

and dissensions, and may you re-unite all our brethren in one fold !

We have sent you our message of condolence, we send herewith our sympathies and our prayers. To the dear members of the minister's family, his gifted brother, his sorrowing mother and wife, his hopeful children, his noble son-in-law, and the other bereaved members of his family, bowed down by this heavy affliction communicate the only consolation which it is in our power to convey at this distance, the consolation that the minister's death is being mourned as the loss of a brother in many thousand households of his fellow-countrymen throughout India. May God protect them all with His shield of mercy, and shower His blessings upon them in the increase of grace and holy life !

We remain,

Your Dear Brethren,

M. G. RANADE,

*President.*

R. G. BHANDARRAR,

*Vice-President.*

### NARENDRA NATH SEN : HIS TOUCHING NOTE OF REVERENCE IN THE *Indian Mirror*.

In truth and without exaggeration, we are surrounded on all sides by the triumphs of his lofty intellect and pure, loving soul. We leave to other hands the labor of love to record the touching and instructive history of a man, who, by the common consent of the European

and native races, was the foremost Hindu of modern times. It will be our task on the present occasion to pass under hasty review the moral and intellectual qualities, by which he acquired that immense influence over the minds of men—an influence that in many cases acted with the irresistible power of a spell. It may be that we may be charged with partiality in our estimate of the value of his life's work, but while the echoes of his calm, earnest voice are still ringing in our ears, and while the soft, solemn look of his eyes is still upon us, we feel that the duty we have undertaken, though beyond our strength, must yet be done.

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In his case, it should be borne in mind that he came forward not with a complete revelation to declare to the world, but with a mission to set forth the ancient religion of his Aryan fathers, as it was professed and acted up to in pre-historic days. His work was necessarily of a Progressive character. Though he had reached down to the basis of ancient Hinduism, it was necessary for him to seek for truths that still lay hidden among its ruins. In the secret searchings of his soul, the idea had struck him that a universal religion, moulded out of a modification and adaptation of prevailing creeds, might be the most suitable form for all races of mankind to worship and serve the One, Universal, and Eternal God. It was this idea, in truth a grand and sublime idea, he unceasingly sought by prayer, and by exhortation in speech and in writing to develop in the New Dispensation. His large heart and broad mind had embraced the

spiritual wants of all humanity ; and, though he labored in the East, his labors were carried on with direct eye to an equal benefit for the West. His pure motives and his high aims were appreciated and sympathised with in countries in Europe and America, where India had before been merely a geographical idea, and where the Hindu race and religion had been regarded as parts of a dead and buried history. It was left to Keshub to bring into close contact with the Western mind a Hindu race and religion reviving after long ages of torpor and neglect into a new life, fresh with the freshness and strong with the strength of undying youth. But in India itself, his success in awakening the national mind to the necessity of earnestly searching after religious truth and to the hallowing influence of religion has been marvellous.

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THE ERUDITE EDITOR, *Bombay Chronicle*.

HIS TRIBUTE OF PRAISE.

His (Keshub's) ability, zeal, and enthusiasm, as the preacher and advocate of the creed and sect of which he was the expounder and leader, were of that high order which to earnest reformers all over the world have always stood in good stead for securing converts and adherents. His career, as a religious preacher of monotheistic doctrines, and an advocate of cosmopolitan social institutions and usages, has been certainly very remarkable. In the sort of work undertaken and vigorously prosecuted by him, the deceased Keshub had few equals in his time in India.



# TRIBUTES FROM THE INDIAN AND FOREIGN PRESS.

*The Hindu Patriot.*

*Calcutta, January 1884.*

"A PRINCE has fallen ! Babu Keshub Chunder Sen is dead ! He was not a prince of blood Royal, a prince feudatory or tributary, or a prince in any other acceptation of the term. He was a prince among men. His sway extended over the empire of thought. He raised himself to that exalted position by the sheer force of his intellect, by the dint of his own exertions, and by the strength of his own character. His scholastic career was not brilliant, but from his early life he cherished a religious fervor, which carried him to regions of thought and speculation, which he made his own. Study and self-culture and self-discipline made him what he afterwards became. His wonderful eloquence, his marvellous powers of persuasion, and his keen insight into the recesses of the human heart, enabled him to wield that potent influence over society which he acquired from the commencement of his public life. He was a noble product of Western education and culture. He was a man born to command but not to be commanded, to lead but not to be led, to guide but not to be guided. Hence it was that he cut off the ties and bonds which he had in early life contracted, and set up a school of his own, a coterie of his own, and an audience of his own. He was not intolerant of other men's opinions, but he had faith and strength in his own thoughts and musings, and the courage of his own convictions. In a less critical age he might have become a prophet. In this iron

age he was revered as a leader of thought, as a teacher, guide, and philosopher.

But Babu Keshub Chunder Sen was not simply a religious reformer. He was also a social reformer. He was a zealous advocate of temperance. He was a friend to education and supported schools with the funds of his society. He was himself immensely indebted to the press, and worked to extend its usefulness. He was the first native of India, who brought out a pice paper in Bengali, we allude to the *Sulava Samachar*. He founded the Albert Hall. He established the Indian Reform Association for the promotion of social and moral progress of his countrymen. He was always ready to join any public movement, which was not of a political character, having for its object the amelioration of the condition of the people of this country. Although the number of his registered disciples, notwithstanding his labours of a quarter of a century, was not commensurate with his zeal and devotion, it cannot be denied that he exercised considerable influence over the whole body of educated natives. He constituted a sort of connecting link between Europeans and Natives. He was held in high esteem by the rulers of the land particularly by Lords Lawrence and Northbrook. By the leaders of native society he was held in high respect. Although differing in opinion they could not withhold their respect from him for the gentleness of his manners, his amiability, the austerities of his life and his high character.

Such was the man who has been taken away in the prime of life by the Disposer of All Events ! The loss,

which his premature death (he was only forty-five years of age) has inflicted upon the country, is irreparable. Take him all in all we shall not look upon his like again ! ”

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*Statesman and Friend of India.*

*10th January, 1884.*

I

“ We announced yesterday morning that the great leader of the Brahmo Somaj community, the ‘ Minister ’ Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, was in a state of extreme danger, and that he would probably have ceased to breathe ere our readers had the morning paper in their hands. After much suffering, borne with the utmost patience and composure, the ‘ Minister ’ fell asleep at ten minutes to 10 a. m. From five o’clock in the morning, the pulse was hardly perceptible, and he ceased to breathe five hours later. His son-in-law, the Maharaja of Cooch Behar, stood ministering at his side to the last, and a large number of devoted disciples and friends were round his couch. A commendatory prayer for the dying master, was offered by one of the ministers of the Brahmo Somaj Church, and joined in by all present, Keshub’s old friend and teacher, the Rev. Dr. Dall, being one of them. ‘ A prince and a great man has this day fallen ’ amongst us, and it will be no easy task to tell mankind what the great ‘ Minister ’ was, and his great life-work. He has fallen in comparatively early life, for he was, we believe, but 40 or 42 years old. His remains

were cremated with ceremonies according to the prescribed rules of the New Samhita, of which he was himself the author, yesterday afternoon, at the Nimtollah Ghat by the Ganges side."

## II

"He is gone. Gone to God, must now be the answer for all who ask to see Keshub Chunder Sen. Not a few visitors from distant lands have sought him out. Travellers in India have said, "We must know by actual vision this rare flower of the East : his presence will be a thing to be remembered." Can it be that a handful of ashes is all that remains to us of that fine form, that almost typical grace and glory of Bengal ? Only forty-five ; and gone already ! Just in the prime of manhood, and we are not again to hear that voice of music ! It is hard to believe it. Months of severe suffering left no mark of age on that cheek or brow. His fine eye was turned from side to side, to the very last, on those that loved him ; it seemed to see them, long after the rigors of death had marbled those eloquent lips, and its chill had stiffened the hand that would have been raised in benediction. For months, physical suffering had lanced him with its keenest crystals ; and it is a real consolation to know that he suffers no more. His last call in the sanctuary, was that of a little child for its mother. None that heard it can forget his last prayer to *Ma ! Ma !*—the cry of profoundest *bhukti* and loving faith in the Only Helper. For weary, lingering hours, human love chanted at his pillow Keshub's

anthem, " Victory to Thy will, oh! loving God of Truth Victory to Thee, our only joy, wisdom, righteousness ! " This in the Sanskrit reads, "*Jai jai ! Sachchidananda Hari.*" All other prayers at that crisis hour, were poured out around him in sighs and tears and lamentations. And friends were, once and again withdrawn from the crowded chamber, when grief became irrepressible,—lest it should reach the ear of the dying master, and disturb the evident victory of the spirit over the flesh. One, at least, who stood near, could not but realize the privilege granted him above many, in England and America, who would have so gladly joined the circle who there sought to lift up the sufferer to God, in the arms of their faith and love.

After the storm, the calm. In the calmer season of reflection that is coming, history and biography will do their duty. All we can do today is to put on record the rare respect and honor that are felt for this man, by both East and West. So full of life is the Brahmo movement, that there is a feeling abroad that it must grow and thrive wherever Western thought touches Eastern devotion. It will have varied phases and many captains. No one can be its single leader. No one can dictate its symbols, or control its organization. That is the Spirit's work. " The soul is form, and doth the body make." Keshub Chunder did his best and bravest to put his spirit into forms both Hindoo and Christian. Only time can tell how these will meet the needs of awakening India."

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*The Englishman (January, 1884).*

I

" The ceremony of cremating the remains of the late Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, the great Brahmo leader, took place yesterday evening at the Nimtollah Burning Ghat. At about (half <sup>9.45</sup> past 10) a.m. Babu Keshub Chunder Sen expired at his residence at "Lily Cottage" and immediately after his remains were laid out on a new sandalwood bed-stead which was covered with Marygolfs, Jessamine and Roses. The corpse was dressed in a white silk *dhoti*, and at intervals, some of the disciples of the Brahmo leader sprinkled rose-water on it, and placed garlands of flowers all over. At noon the bier was removed to the new chapel, adjoining Lily Cottage, which was being erected for the late Babu Keshub Chunder Sen's private devotions, and at 3-30 p.m., a photographer from Messrs. Bourne and Shepherd came and photographed the remains which were then lying, an object of touching regard to hundreds of the Brahmo leaders, disciples, friends and admirers. Shortly after this, the male mourners and visitors, were requested to leave the chapel to allow of the entrance of a number of the female relatives and followers of the deceased, who then entered and gave vent to their feelings of grief and sorrow at the death of their beloved leader. The bier, with the remains was then carried in procession along the roads from the Chapel to Nimtollah Ghat, followed by thousands and thousands of Natives of all castes and creeds, and by a very numerous gather-

ing of leading European Gentlemen in Calcutta. At Nimtollah Ghat the body was, with Brahmo rites, placed on the funeral pyre, which was composed entirely of sandalwood. After cremation the ashes were collected and placed in an urn which will be deposited in the deceased minister's private Chapel. The procession was headed by a disciple who bore in his hands a banner, bearing on it the words " New Dispensation." As the procession reached the old Brahmo Mandir in Colootollah, the body was put down, and a hymn chanted " glory be to the man who has got a pure heart ;" and the same ceremony was repeated when the procession passed the Sadharan Somaj Mandir, the chant being repeated at intervals till the burning ghat was reached. No better proof could be found of the respect and esteem in which the late Brahmo leader was held than in the thousands who followed his remains to witness the cremation ceremony and in the thousands who, throughout yesterday, visited Lily Cottage, in Circular Road, to see the last of the remains of the great Brahmo leader, among whom was his son-in-law, the Maharaja of Kuch Behar and other most prominent natives in Calcutta."

## II

"In Keshub Chunder Sen the Hindu community has lost its most widely known representative and the recognised leader of its most advanced religious thought. His death at a comparatively early age, and in the full blossom of his powers, is a loss which must be deeply felt and mourned ; and we would, in sincere sympathy

add our tribute to the memory of a man, who has for many years been so remarkable for his gifts, and so conspicuous for his leadership among his countrymen.

His career has been in many respects so exceptional, that it is still difficult to form an exact estimate of his work and of his influence. He has been often undoubtedly over-estimated by the admiring enthusiasm of his immediate followers: and he has latterly been not seldom decried to an unjust extent by his enemies as an unreal egotist and pretender. This is the common fate of men of unusual force and methods, and in his case, as in so many others, the truth no doubt lies between the extremes. Our practical English standard is the severest test of all, for it is only the practical that will survive; yet test him as we may, Keshub Chunder Sen was no common Hindu, and it must be admitted that his success as that largely of a self-made and self-cultured man, was reared upon a foundation of independent individuality and purpose. Whatever point of view may be taken, there was much good in him that must be universally admitted and recognised. His amiable character, his graceful manners, his refined address were appreciated by all, and made him a fine model of the modern Bengali gentleman, and an ennobling presence in contemporary Hindu life.

His activity was almost entirely connected with Calcutta, his birth place and his permanent home, where he lived to become the most romantic and interesting figure in native society. It is unnecessary to recapitulate the well-known facts of his life, which have become



by the force of circumstances, a kind of public property. No Hindu ever made his name so widely known beyond his own country, or drew the attention of the public so closely in his own day to the details of his career. Yet his life was of the simplest and gentlest, for the elements of his humanity were kindly mixed by nature. His success was mainly due to his careful self-culture, his unfailing confidence in himself, and the skill with which he adapted himself to his circumstances.

His visit to England greatly extended and permanently established his reputation. Hindus of remarkable ability and culture, like Ram Mohan Roy and Dwarka Nath Tagore, had already passed to England and charmed select circles with a novel fascination; but it remained for Keshub Chunder Sen to popularise from the platform and through the press the conception of native and essential reform in India. By his affluent eloquence and fervid appeals, he startled and sometimes perhaps unconsciously misled the public mind of England. Everywhere he made a deep impression by his high character and accomplishments, and created anew English interest in his countrymen. Since his return he has been able to sustain and even to increase that interest, till it became a fashion for English visitors to Calcutta to make a sort of pilgrim visit to the "minister" of Brahmo Somaj in Lily Cottage. Over not a few his dignified appearance and conversation threw a strange irresistible spell, so that they passed from him as enthusiastic admirers; but even the best and most discriminating did not go empty away.

As an orator, he achieved the highest success among his educated countrymen. He described public utterances as unpremeditated, but his power was evidently the result of careful training and preparation. His English was wonderfully pure ; his delivery free and graceful ; and his finish at times almost Ciceronian. It was this faculty, especially in its annual displays before the thousands crowded in the Town Hall, that so greatly impressed his English admirers and made him the idol of young Bengal whose special ambition is to excel in oratory."

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*The Indian Daily News (January, 1884).*

" Yesterday Calcutta heard that one of the most remarkable men of the present generation had passed away. Though young in years Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen had almost from his youth occupied the place of a great leader of thought amongst the natives. His position was unique, because the doctrines he preached seemed to be progressive in their nature, and to aim at developing a new system, specially Indian in its characteristics. Keshub Chunder Sen's work is not likely to be fully appreciated in this century ; but when men shall look back after a generation or two for the causes of great movements in thought and religion,—movements affecting probably the Indian Christianity of that day in a degree only less than they affect its Hindooism, it will probably be that no figure will occupy so large a space as that of the man who has just gone home to his rest.

This is not the place to discuss the peculiar system inaugurated by Keshub Chunder Sen. We have only to-day to express our own sorrow, and we doubt not the sorrow of our readers, at the early passing away of a man who was a great man, because, in spite of many peculiarities and some mistakes, he was a strong influence in that awakening, political and religious, which is fast coming upon India. Keshub Chunder Sen will stand as an orator in the front rank with men like Gladstone, Bright, and Gambetta, except that his influence and his oratory were devoted to religion and the culture of the heart, instead of to politics and statecraft. Few Englishmen of any age had a more thorough command of the subtler resources of the English tongue. He could sound the depths of metaphysics, and whilst commanding wonder and admiration at the power of his fancy and the vigour and richness of his imagination he could also at will unlock the closest gates of feeling. Such a man was too large to fill a subordinate post, and yet his qualities were scarcely those of a mighty fashioner. He could not organise because nature formed him to rouse and excite, and it was his special mission to create a strong and living desire for higher things in the minds of his countrymen, and to focus their thoughts upon religious subjects. He drew to himself a powerful body of teachers, men of great mental power and singular eloquence, and to these he has bequeathed the task of gathering in the crop he himself sowed so abundantly. He created the church of which he was the head, but it is for those who sat at his feet to give that church a

form and system which shall make it a permanent institution in this land. When we consider that about this season Keshub Chunder Sen was accustomed to deliver in the Town Hall orations of a kind special to the man, the age, and the country, we begin to feel how great is the loss which has overtaken the country and how potent a factor he was in the great work of restoring civilization to India. His influence was not confined to Bengal ; it extended to the Punjab, Bombay and Madras; and wherever it was felt, it was a power over the thoughts and hearts of men even when it did not succeed in ranging them by his side as disciples. We who have stood in his presence may regard him as a remarkable man, a great man ; but to those who come after us his splendid genius will be remembered to the forgetting of the faults we his contemporaries have possibly exaggerated, and he will be recognised in a special sense as a great teacher,—a man penetrated with an exceeding love of humanity, and a wide and a generous sympathy with all that is noblest, and purest, and best in our common nature."

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*The Indian Christian Herald (January, 1884)*

"Verily, a prince and a great man has passed away. Keshub Chunder Sen has entered into rest. He fell asleep on Tuesday morning, after a protracted illness of a most painful type.

Mourners by the multitude are to be found in Europe, Asia, and America. Keshub was a house-hold name all

over the civilized world, and to know him was to be drawn to him in the bonds of love. To us Indians, in particular, the loss is irreparable. We are overtaken by a national calamity. We feel altogether unnerved.

We cannot yet collect our thoughts sufficiently to attempt an estimate of Keshub's life and labors. Our heart is full. To Keshub must be assigned a place among the central figures in the history of our nation—and an important place, beyond doubt, must it be. Providence had manifestly raised him for a high mission, and endued him with unique gifts and graces for the fulfilment of it. That mission, undertaken in connection with the Brahmo Somaj, of which he was the third and greatest founder, bore a threefold character. It was his Mission to infuse a religious spirit into the educated youth of the community. It was his Mission to give a religious basis to social reform, and transfer it from the region of theory to the region of practical life. It was his Mission, above all, to commend Christ to the popular mind of India, and prepare the country for a general acceptance of the faith as it is in Jesus.

The effect of English education upon our young men had been that they had drifted into indifferentism. Missionary institutions helped to stem the tide. A religious leader, however, was in demand to meet the exigencies of the case. And God raised Keshub to fill that place. Once he entered on the career Providence thus indicated, the educated youth flocked round him, and thus was inaugurated a movement which has since imbued the rising generation with the spirit of religion.

The question of social reform had been taken up, but it made little advance. Civilization was invoked as the motive power, and as might have been expected, the cause of reform failed to take root. Reformed ideas floated about. Men indulged in no end of tall talk. But the practical outcome was disappointing. A religious basis was needed, and it was Keshub's to proclaim that basis, and follow up the proclamation by personally illustrating it in practical life. This meant sacrifice, but Keshub was prepared to make the sacrifice, and precept sealed by example was bound to bear fruit.

The Mission with which we have credited Keshub with reference to the Christian cause, may startle some minds. But we have credited him with it advisedly. His attitude towards Christ has often been misunderstood, and perhaps not always without reason. Our conviction, however, is—and personal intercourse had induced the conviction—that Keshub had yielded his heart's allegiance to Christ, and longed for the day when the heart of India would be won for Christ. He was anxious that multitudes should accept Christ with him, and in view of their unpreparedness, he practised a reserve and self-denial, which may or may not be absolutely justifiable, but which bespoke a heart that yearned for a national advance to Christ. This was clearly the aim of his life, and as time rolled on and the point to which the various aspects of his labors converged became apparent, it was manifest that he was looking upto Christ and marching on. The national mind was adverse to Christ and his claims and it was perhaps necessary

that some one should rise, who would not be regarded as having estranged himself from the nation, and commend Christ to the people. To Keshub in Providence was assigned this charge, and faithfully did he discharge it to the end of his days. And it is given us to rejoice in believing that the aversion to Christ of olden times has largely disappeared.

Of Keshub's gifts and graces, we need not say much. They are well known. Keshub was born to rule. He had a commanding physique. His eloquence was commanding. Do we mean the eloquence of his tongue? That of course, for who could forget those magic lips? But we mean also the eloquence of his heart, which if more than the most is a possibility, was even more commanding than his tongue. He won every heart that came into contact with him. No one could approach him without the inspiration of love and respect. Of extraordinary will power, he carried through whatever he undertook. Always in the region of the practical, he put his life ever in the foreground, and lived out his views before he propounded them. Religion was a veritable reality with him, permeating his walk and conversation to the minutest details. His childlike approaches to the Deity, his devotional fervour, his unwavering faith, the happy solemnity of the atmosphere he always created round him, have left their impress on every heart that had experienced or witnessed them. During his illness, his faith in the love of God served to allay much of the racking pain. He used to be much with his God, and had cheering prospects of the world in view. As long

as he had the strength, he joined in the hymns which he delighted to hear, and the last hymn which was sung at his request, and which had visibly a soothing effect on his agonized body, related to Christ at Gethsemane.

His love for Christ naturally begat in him a love for all Christ's servants. He could not bear the idea of any of Christ's servants being in trouble. He was first and foremost in taking up the cause of the Salvation Army in Bombay, and in seeking to protect their interests with a true brotherly regard. When some of our Calcutta Missionaries were prosecuted in the great Beadon Square case, and it was apprehended in certain quarters that they would be fined, he could be seen waiting in a carriage at the Police gate with a purse to pay down the fine if imposed. He cultivated the most cordial relations with Bengali Christians, and was ever willing to co-operate with them. For ourselves, we feel a gap which may never be supplied. Our only consolation is that we have reasons to believe that we shall meet brother Keshub in glory as one of the Lord's redeemed.

India mourns the loss of her greatest son, the Brahmo Samaj, of her greatest leader, and the Christian Church, of her greatest ally.

We commend all bereaved ones, our dear brother's bereaved family, his bereaved colleagues, his bereaved followers, and his bereaved friends, to the God of all consolation !"

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*Indian Empire (January, 1884).*

"We for ourselves have carefully watched the proceedings of the remarkable man for the last ten years; and we must do him the justice of saying that Babu Keshub Chunder Sen was the very best product of English education and Christian civilization in India. The influence which the English nation has been for a century exercising over the people of India—a people who can boast of glorious traditions and of an ancient civilization of a very high order—has been variously described; and the greatest thinkers of England have already been disposed to think that the most difficult problem which England will shortly be called upon to consider and settle is that connected with her Indian dependency. \* \* Keshub Chunder Sen has always been the very embodiment of the important changes that were being gradually brought about as a consequence of this potent influence. In him we distinctly recognised a harmonious fusion of the east and the west—a religious, political, moral and social fusion.

The leavening and civilising influence of Christianity was always an object of regard with him; but, the materialistic tendencies of the Christian nations, and especially the unwholesome influence those tendencies would unquestionably exercise in the formation of the character of a future Indian, Keshub Chunder could not contemplate without a feeling of horror. His was the mission to conserve all that is good and great in Hindu philosophy and Hindu sociology, against a vigorous and organised attack of Christian civilisation ;

and, then to adapt them to the stern requirements of the times. He was more of a constructive than destructive reformer. He fully realised, what a majority of educated Indians have since realised, that while it is impossible to shut out the powerful influence of a Christian Government, India will not fare well by making an indiscriminate and wholesale surrender of her religious, political and social institutions. The great truth which Keshub Chunder Sen fully comprehended and preached was India's conservatism, but in a liberal spirit and in due consonance with the signs of the times. That an Indian should at once combine in his life and character the results of western science and eastern spirituality was, in our opinion, the one grand idea upon which Keshub Chunder Sen lived and which he earnestly and unceasingly, through good report and evil report, laboured to impress on his countrymen.

In him, the Hindu community have lost the ablest and the foremost of their well-wishers ; in him, the Christian world has lost the most uncompromising advocate and admirer of Christ's Christianity, and an unsparing enemy of the present mutilation of his divine precepts and teachings. The political aspirant will profusely miss the person who dived deep into the question of India's political advancement, and who exerted unceasingly to shorten the gulf that separates the various nationalities living in this vast country.

We offer our most sincere commiseration to the family of the great deceased. Their best consolation

lies in the circumstance that their grief is shared by the entire population of India. May his ashes rest in peace!"

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*The Bengali (January 1884).*

"Tuesday last witnessed the death of one of the greatest men whom this country or this age has produced. It is not given to us to pry into the secrets of the future. But if we may be permitted to take a forecast of the estimation which Babu Keshub Chunder Sen is to enjoy among coming generations, we may say that he will be regarded as one of the great teachers of mankind who has discovered new sources of thought, new springs of action, in the religious side of man's nature. However conflicting may be the views of his contemporaries with reference to the merits of his teachings or the personal acts of his life, of this we may be sure that he will stand forth before the judgment of posterity, as a man of great genius and of great eloquence, who dedicated the labours of a life-time to the service of humanity. His weaknesses, if there were any, will be forgotten, *his mistakes, for who amongst us is infallible, will be condoned.* The recollection of his services will survive, his triumphs will be remembered. The impetus that he communicated to the religious thought of his country will be cherished in grateful recollection, and in the pantheon of our great men, in that noble temple which shall be replenished from the great dead of all ages, he will occupy a place

by the side of those great teachers of our race, whose names excite homage and veneration in our breasts. Chaitanya, Ram Mohun Roy and Keshub Chunder will form the religious trinity of modern India. But he will be remembered, we venture to think, not so much for the merits of his teachings as for the impulse he communicated to the religious and moral thought of his countrymen. He was the author of a great revival—he called forth into vigorous life the dormant moral and religious instincts of his countrymen. His was the word that broke the spell, that roused the sleeper from his sleep and communicated the flutter of new life into an all but dead system. Such a man deserves our gratitude, and we trust the public expression of sorrow which must soon follow will take a permanent and useful form. He has lived for us; and let him live in the hearts of our children and our children's children even unto remote generations. We trust all will sink their differences, and unite in honouring one of the greatest men of their race."

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*Indian Nation (January, 1881).*

"The man taken all round and looked at on the intellectual, the moral and the emotional side, may be fitly described in one word as a "hero" in the Carlylean sense. He was not the man to be deceived by mere formulas or simulacra. The great facts of existence were ever present to him. He felt, every moment that he lived, that he stood in the centre

of immensities and influx of eternities. Life and Death, God and the Universe, Time and Space were realities,—flaming realities, from which he could never for one moment turn his eye. He was not the man to hunt after explanations of this or that eternal fact. The facts were everything to him; the explanations mere moonshine. He could not persuade himself to look upon the universe as a huge mill, grinding mechanically, or upon man as a conscious automaton. Scientific reasoning gives us mediate knowledge and is necessitated by the impotence of our thought. The only knowledge which Keshub Chunder Sen prized was immediate knowledge, actual perception of realities and not a mere inferential belief. He would never stoop to argue with a man who wanted proofs of the existence of the Deity; he saw Him, that was proof enough. Let us therefore not judge Keshub Chunder by any scholastic standard. He had come, as Carlyle would say, to convey a message to mankind, to awaken them to a sense of the Eternal Verities. A consciousness of this mission was the mainspring of his actions. He felt, he saw and he spoke. His sincerity was the true origin of his marvellous eloquence."

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*Indian Echo (January, 1884).*

I

"The man whose illness has been keeping the entire public, Native and European, all over the land, in painful suspense during the last few weeks, is now no more! Keshub Chunder Sen,—one of the

world's greatest orators—is dead! The jewel which has been shining so brilliantly on the tattered diadem of fallen India has dropped—alas, for ever! On Tuesday last at 9-53 in the morning Keshub Babu died at his residence, Lily Cottage, of a protracted and painful illness of several months. He fell into a stupor the day before from which he never more awakened. The melancholy news spread like wildfire and before many hours the whole town was mourning the premature death of the great Brahmo leader. Three of our dailies and the *Liberal* issued extraordinaries announcing the sad event. Though to a great extent prepared for this painful event, it has fallen upon us, as upon many others, like a thunder-bolt. We feel unnerved. Our heart is full and we can say no more. A large number of the friends and admirers of the deceased were present at the Lily Cottage to accompany the funeral procession which started for Nimtollah Ghat at 4 p.m. At the Ghat were present over three thousand persons of varied creeds who, sinking all differences of opinion in the sense of the great loss they have all sustained, joined, the disciples of the great leader in doing the last honor to the lamented deceased and showing the high esteem and veneration in which they always held him personally. Every one of this vast crowd was in tears, and, we hope, it will be some consolation to the bereaved family to find the whole country mourning with them the loss of their dear departed.

We would do ourselves the pleasure of presenting our subscribers, next week with a portrait of the late

lamented Babu Keshub Chunder Sen as a small tribute to his memory. "

## II

### KESHUB :

" A lustrous star has fallen from Bharat sky,  
That gave such life and light to many an eye,—  
A noble star it was and beauteous bright,  
The worlds, both New and Old, imbibed its light :  
Keshub is dead !—Echo carries the news  
And steeps the Earth in sorrow's sable hues.  
Not golden Ind alone his loss bemoans,  
Far distant countries raise their sighs and groans  
The man was truly great and gifted high,  
Who was to numerous souls both light and eye :  
So wondrous brilliant were his powers of mind,  
E'en his foemen were to them not blind.  
His potent tongue had such a torrent force  
It swept down all that barred its sweeping course,  
His earnest words so chained his hearers' heart  
They sat bewitched as if by magic art.  
He planted faith in barren sceptic mind,  
And nursed it sweet with care after its kind,  
The growing sapling spread its branches young  
The zealous Brahmos their hosannas sung.  
But sudden rose some blasts with dismal suite,  
The spreading tree was shaken to its root,  
Some branches, large and small, were broken straight,  
And thus its growth was checked by adverse fate :—  
But though the tree was made a little bare,  
It stood still strong to prove gardener's care.  
But not in sacred field of faith alone  
His wondrous skill and foster'g care were shown,  
In social field he also trophies won,  
Like lovely lotus wed to lusty sun.

A model husband and a model son.  
 His model virtues soothed religious fire ;  
 Mild as a nun and simple as a child.  
 He lived a saint upon this sinful wild,  
 Honors divine he paid to womankind,  
 In this he beat even the German mind.  
 The home to him appeared a temple fine  
 In which the offerings made to sex divine,  
 That sacred ground where ghostly comforts flow  
 A kind of heaven upon the Earth below.  
 Thus lived the man who led a holy life,  
 And fared so happy with a peerless wife ;  
 He proved in deed what's writ in learned tome,  
 A Yogi might not leave his house and home.  
 A learned mind well matched with fervent heart.  
 He meetly played the great Reformer's part,  
 He laboured hard to find a matchless creed  
 That'd bind the world in blessed love indeed :  
 The New Dispensation's a glorious thing  
 Whose praises might the tuneful Angels sing  
 Can shafts of Philo such a man destroy  
 Who tasted Heaven's sweet ambrosial joy -  
 Keshub is dead !— Ah no he cannot die  
 Whose spirit leads way to Regions high."

Brahmo  
*Bengal Public Opinion* (January, 1884).

It is needless to say that Keshub had a large number of opponents. *The Bengal Public Opinion*, the organ of the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj, fully represented them. The value of its estimate, therefore, is as peculiar as it is high.

The *Opinion* in recording the sad national bereavement said :—"The cruel hand of death has



snatched away another Indian great man. Babu Keshub Chunder Sen is no more ! He had been suffering from various disorders since the last two or three months. His doctors had given up all hopes long ago, and after a very painful and protracted illness he succumbed on the morning of Tuesday last. His death will cast a gloom all over India. His friends and admirers from Europe and America, will mingle their tears with those of his own countrymen and mourn his premature death. Keshub Chunder was yet in his manhood, when the cruel hand of death snatched him away. His age at the time of his death was only a little over forty. His loss will be deeply mourned by the whole of India. As for the Church of which he was the head and mainstay his loss to her will be simply irreparable. That Keshub Chunder was a great man, perhaps the greatest man in India at the present moment, few will deny. Friends and foes alike respected and admired his great Genius, and friends and foes alike will, at this mournful hour, join together in mourning his premature death. His faults and his foibles, his weaknesses, and his shortcomings, will now be buried with his ashes, while his virtues will remain for ever a grand legacy to his countrymen, and his Genius will ever receive the homage and admiration of the whole world to the eternal glorification of his God, and his country. May Lord in His Mercy grant peace to his departed soul ! "

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*Tattwabodhini Patrika.*

(Translated.)

" With a sorrow-stricken heart we announce that the *Brahmananda* Keshub Chunder Sen has ceased his mortal labors. The meridian sun is set. It is a great pity that we have to mourn his untimely loss. We have no hope of again seeing him, there is no chance of ever hearing his sweet, refreshing and tender words, and we are once for all deprived of his holy contact. His gentle countenance beaming with holiness shall ever remain engraved in our memory. Now, the infinite field has been the scene of his mission. Removing the burden of this world from his breast he has entered into a new life in a new sphere. Here we are weeping in sorrow, there he is rejoicing. May he be so happy ! May the Lord of life and death, who has called him away, preserve him !

Most persons live on earth for their family, but *Mahatma* Keshub Chunder was born for the world. His great heart felt for all irrespective of color and creed. It is for this reason that he felt an irresistible impulse to communicate in public what was inherent in him. He readily sacrificed all to gratify his heart's desire of distributing the wealth of religion to the poor, weak and helpless. In fact, owing to the indefatigable energy and patience and the burning zeal of Keshub Chunder that the Brahmo religion spread far and wide. What he understood of religion, what message of salvation he received, the same he used to preach from door to door. The English and Bengali languages were alike his slaves,

poetry was his sister, elocution his playmate and spiritual illumination was his reward from above. This highly-gifted individual, having taken a firm stand in the mission field of religion, did immense good which the world will not forget. His bright holy life, like a shining light, showed many the way to manhood. Perseverance under difficulties, energy in clearing the thorns of the way, magnanimity in patiently bearing the persecution of his opponents and aptitude for binding all into one common bond were the qualities that peculiarly belonged to him. So the foot-prints of this great man are not left on sand but imprinted on the rock. This glorious star of India is now set, but he still lives in his fame and work. Although lately we had some difference of opinion with him on particular points, still we must confess that we have lost in him a real friend and brother, and the venerable *Prodhan Acharjya*, who at one time had placed all hopes of the Brahmo Samaj on him, lost his chiefest and best disciple "

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*The Indu Prokash (Bombay).*

"The message of condolence sent by Her Majesty through Viceroy to the family of the late lamented Keshub Chunder Sen in their sad bereavement is calculated to add to her popularity with her native subjects. It is a positive proof of the steady though silent interest which our sovereign takes in all that contributes to the regeneration of this country. It is well-known that for Keshub Chunder Her Majesty entertained great respect

ever since he was honoured by her acquaintance during his visit to England, but it was not respect paid him for his eloquence or abilities so much for the good and glorious cause which he had at heart and which, Her Majesty found, he, of all, was fitted by Providence to promote. The religious and moral improvement of the people has ever given Her Majesty deep interest, and long before Keshub Chunder came to be honoured by her acquaintance, she had written to Lord Canning that her greatest wish "was to see her Indian subjects happy, contented and flourishing." The message of sympathy now conveyed to Keshub Chunder's son on behalf of Her Majesty, cannot fail to be appreciated by all, whether they be followers or not of the great man whose death is mourned all over the civilized world."

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*Subodha Patrika (Bombay, January, 1884).*

"The message of condolence, conveyed by Her Majesty through Lord Ripon to Baboo Karuna Chandra Sen on the death of his lamented father, Baboo Keshub Chunder, bears a singularly valuable and unmistakable testimony of the keen interest which the Empress is known to take in the religious and social advancement of her Indian subjects. Babu Keshub's visit to England in 1870 and the impressive lectures he delivered during his stay amongst the English public served to bring him to the notice of Her Majesty, who, it is said, desired to make his acquaintance. To Keshub Chunder this acquaintance was probably the beginning of a new spirit

within his heart. It assured him that the noble mission to which he had resolved to devote the whole of his life had the sympathy and support of his country's Ruler. Loyalty to Her Majesty was one of the principles he taught and inculcated as a part of his religion, and his lectures abound with references to the excellent traits of character which have endeared our Empress to all. Believing that Englishmen had the peculiar talent of finding out injustice and remedying it, he throughout preached moderation in political agitation, and so careful was he to preserve the independence and catholic spirit of his Church, that he scrupulously avoided mixing himself with political controversies or anything savouring of them. He had the knack of gaining sympathy and forming friendships in such a way to advance cause of his Church ; and thus it happens to-day that although the Brahmo Somaj cannot count its followers by millions, yet the influence it wields and is likely to wield on the religious and social destinies of the people is admitted by all Her Majesty might well feel the loss of the leader of such a movement, one which has stood as a firm ally of the British Government, and which has always proclaimed that nothing will ensure its successful dissemination but the continuance of that rule. While the message which Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to send to the deceased hero's son, will go far to assuage the sorrows of his bereaved family, it will be looked upon by Keshub's countrymen as a message to them from their Sovereign, intimating that their religious and social interests have ever occupied Her Majesty's thoughts and

that they must not allow the memory of the great and good man they have so recently lost to fade away into oblivion. Our countrymen will, we dare say, draw this useful lesson from the Royal message. Of course the work that Keshub accomplished is so grand, good, and useful, that before it anything that his countrymen may raise in his honor and for the preservation of his memory will sink into nothing. His Church, his life, his actions require no memorial. They will speak unto future ages for themselves, and keep his memory ever alive and hallowed. But we for whom he lived, must bear our part. A country that knows not how to respect its great men hardly deserves to live. Let us not be open to the imputation."

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*Lucknow Witness (January, 1884).*

"It would be received with incredulity by those perhaps best qualified to form an opinion, if one said that the Hindoos had spiritual natures which yielded to sympathy more readily than their intellects yielded to argument. Yet Keshub Chunder Sen demonstrated that to be the fact. He appealed to the craving of human nature for a higher life, and his countrymen responded to the appeal. He offered himself as a guide and they followed him without asking for any credentials beyond their own impression that he was in the way of the truth. With a zeal not always surpassed by Christians, his disciples sacrificed time, strength, pleasure, money and earthly prospects to meet the requirements of God,

as their teacher made them feel these to be. And he was no quack, working upon their superstition with mysterious rites and formulæ : he touched their spirits and led them."

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*The Christian Union.*

" The death of Keshub Chunder Sen removes the most prominent Oriental in the world, and one of the foremost men of our generation, measuring him by elevation of character, vigor of mind and extent of influence and reputation. The history and creed of the Brahmo Somaj, of which Keshub Chunder Sen was the head and inspiration, have several times been set forth in these columns. This body of earnest, progressive and highly intelligent Hindus represent spiritual progress and religious freedom among their countrymen ; founded more than fifty years ago by Ram Mohun Roy, they have given to the spiritual, theistic thought of India, impulse and direction of the highest importance. Thoroughly imbibing the noble spirit of Ram Mohun Roy, Keshub Chunder Sen added wealth of intellectual power and freedom of spiritual life, which gave the Theistic movement a new impulse, and has immensely broadened its usefulness and deepened its power. The Brahmos, counted numerically, are not many, but they are men of high character and intelligence ; their sympathy with undogmatic and essential Christianity has been pronounced, and the outcome of the movement will be a better comprehension of Christian truth and a more receptive

spirit to its teachings among the most progressive Hindus. Keshub Chunder Sen will take his place among the great religious teachers and reformers ; and while he did not accept the divine mission of Christ, his own elevation of purpose and nobility of character brought him into relations of affection and reverence toward the Divine Teacher far more essentially Christian than the attitude of many nominal believers in Jesus of Nazareth."

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*London Correspondent of The Alliance News  
of Manchester.*

"The news of Keshub Chunder Sen's decease struck mournfully on the ears of all who had learned to honour that earnest Hindu reformer. Its unexpectedness added to its painfulness. We should have been far less surprised had we heard of his intention to revisit this country, where a cordial welcome would have awaited him. These temperance convictions were as firm as they were intelligent, and his speeches in 1870 were the exponents of views and feelings which he continued to cherish as warmly and to avow as resolutely as ever down to the day of his death. His protests against the temptation of his countrymen into drinking habits by the Abkaree system established and diffused by the British Government for the sake of revenue were creditable to him as a patriot and religious reformer. His sonorous eloquence was accompanied by the living, htning, and flashing from a heart indignant at the



wrong done to his Hindu brethren. What can be more effective than the words of this great man in a private letter dated from Simla on June 22nd last, and printed in the *Alliance News*, some months ago :—"The British Government has done much by its unwise and cruel liquor laws to degrade and demoralise our people, and it is high time that it should make amends and atone for its guilt. If it has given us the disease, let it give us the remedy. May the God of suffering India incline its heart to give us the blessing of Local Option!" From the grave of the writer of this appeal it may be conceived to rise, imbued with a deeper pathos and clothed with a loftier power.

Many will seek to do honour to his memory, but no tribute to his worth could be more worthy of him or of those capable of conferring it than a compliance with the above request so touchingly and forcibly expressed."

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*London Daily News.*

(THROUGH REUTER'S AGENCY)

*Calcutta, January 8.*

"The death of Keshub Chunder Sen is  
announced to-day.

Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, whose death is announced in the above telegram, was known in this country as well as in his own as a great reformer of Hindu religion. He was introduced to the English public by the late Lord Lawrence nearly fourteen years ago as the representative of the most advanced section

of the great reforming party which was rising in Bengal. He belonged to that section of the Hindu community which represented the physician class. His grandfather, Ram Comal Sen, was for some years the conductor, in association with the late Mr. Horace Hayman Wilson, the well-known Sanskrit scholar, of the Hindustani Printing Press of which Dr. William Hunter was the proprietor. Ram Comal Sen was afterwards the native secretary of the Asiatic Society, and still later Dewan of the Mint and cashier of the Bank. In a letter written after his death, Mr. Wilson spoke of his ability, integrity and independent spirit, his ardent love of knowledge, his unwearied diligence. 'I never for one instant saw him,' said Mr. Wilson, 'dull of comprehension, weary of labour, discomposed, or angry.' These qualities of the grandfather reappeared in his more eminent grandson. Keshub Chunder Sen was left an orphan in early youth, and was sent by his uncle to an English School. He afterwards graduated in the college at Calcutta where he gained a thorough knowledge of the English language as well as of English history and literature. Like many others of the educated Hindus, Keshub Chunder Sen speedily dissociated himself from the popular forms of the Hindu religion, without, however, departing from what he believed to be its spirit. He was unable to be content with the secularism in which his countrymen sometimes take refuge and he attached himself to the body of Hindu reformers established by the Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The Raja had been a reformer within the old religion. He had established

the Brahmo Somaj or the Brahminic Church, and had endowed a place for the worship of Brahma, the Creator, in Calcutta. Keshub Chunder Sen threw himself with great energy into this movement and speedily made himself the leader of a reforming party within the Brahmo Somaj itself. Lord Lawrence in the speech in which he welcomed Keshub Chunder Sen to England in 1879, said, that it was difficult to appreciate the enormous difficulties which attend any man of the Hindu race who secedes from the religion of his ancestors. "In the eyes of those dearest and nearest to him," said Lord Lawrence, "he was considered as a leper, an outcast from the community." Keshub Chunder Sen, however, had the courage to make the sacrifice himself, and the enthusiasm which could kindle it in others. He became the preacher of a large congregation of monotheistic Brahmins, and a leader of every kind of religious and social reform. He had many personal characteristics which fitted him for such a work. A fine countenance, a majestic presence, and that rapt look which of itself exerts an irresistible fascination over impressible minds, lent wonderful force to a swift, kindling and poetical oratory which married itself to his highly spiritual teaching as "perfect music unto noble words." He came to England in 1870, Lord Lawrence being, in his words, in some degree instrumental in inducing Keshub Chunder Sen to undertake what to a Hindu gentleman was a most serious, indeed a most tremendous undertaking—a voyage across the sea to England. The meeting at which Lord Lawrence spoke was called by the Unitarian Asso-

ciation and presided over by Mr. Samuel Sharpe, the Egyptologist and translator of the Bible, then its president. The welcome was given by Dean Stanley and Lord Lawrence, the Rev. Dr. Martineau, the Rev. Dr. Mullens and the Rev. Dr. Marks. In his reply, Keshub Chunder Sen described the Brahmo Somaj or the Hindu Monotheistic Church, as the restoration of the primitive Hindu religion. He went through the country preaching where the pulpits were open to him, and everywhere gathered interested crowds. He spoke English perfectly with scarcely the suspicion of a foreign accent. He used little action and not much modulation. His pulpit addresses were religious meditations and appeals, delivered with an unfailing fluency without pause or hesitation holding his large audiences with all the power but without any of the arts of the great orator. Before he returned home he had an audience of the Queen at Osborne, by Her Majesty's command, conveyed through the Duke of Argyll. The Queen afterwards expressed the great pleasure she had enjoyed in his conversation, and sent a present of two books containing an autograph inscription to him. He returned home in September, after a stay in England of six months; and has ever since continued his work in India. Some of his methods of late years have alienated the sympathy of some English friends, who failed perhaps to make sufficient allowance for Hindu associations and habits of thought."

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*The London Times*

"It will be admitted that his (Keshub's) objects were lofty. We doubt not that posterity will be able to record higher praise of him than he detected many of the evils under which his countrymen were suffering and that he afforded and left them the example of a pure and laborious life. He found the Brahmo Somaj in existence and he gave it a new impulse and direction, but it may be that in doing so he contributed more than we can yet see with sufficient clearness to its eventual dissolution and disappearance. The true Hindu reformer has yet to be revealed."

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BRITISH AND FOREIGN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION  
ON THE ASCENSION OF MINISTER KESHUB

*Christian Life.*

Mr. H. Jeffery moved the following resolution :—  
"That the Council deeply regret the loss of an earnest and able Indian reformer, by the decease of the late Babu Keshub Chunder Sen. The record of his early struggles to escape from the darkness of idolatry into the light of a monotheistic faith and worship testified to the simplicity and devotion of a mind and heart eager only to learn the truth and follow the path of duty ; and the story of his many painful sacrifices is alike instructive and affecting. He then became the powerful leader in a religious and social reformation, with which his name will be always honourably associated in his own country. In England, on his visit

nearly fourteen years ago, he was most cordially and deservedly welcomed by men of all persuasions who desired the spiritual and moral welfare of India, and the impression which his thoughtful and devout discourses, and his powerful speeches, made upon the Unitarian body at that time will never be effaced. The Council feel that they are but expressing the sentiments of all those, whether native or English and American, who are concerned in the great work of Indian enlightenment, in this testimony of respect for the memory of a good man and a devoted reformer, and they trust that the common sorrow which at this moment unites in one the sympathies of the whole body in India who worship, with Jesus, the God and Father of all, will maintain their union in the great and good work of diffusing throughout their country the holy light of truth and righteousness."

Mr. Jeffery observed that he could not express approval of some of the peculiar developments which had manifested themselves during recent years in connection with the religious movement led by Mr. Sen, but he should abstain from pronouncing judgment upon the conduct of any of the religious reformers of India. They knew best the circumstances with which they have to deal, and they must be left to do their own work in their own way. Mr. Jeffery added that he thought it would be well if their secretary were to express to Mr. Mozoomdar the sympathy which this association feels for him now that the death of Mr. Sen devolves upon him: a new and onerous responsibility in connection with the religious reform movement in his native country.

The Rev. T. W. Freckelton, in seconding the resolution, expressed his regret that the world had lost such a man as Mr. Sen. He never had any doubt that the movement which he led would in course of time, by its own natural vigor, throw off those peculiarly oriental features which had recently presented themselves in connection with it, and which seemed to have resulted from changes of view in Mr. Sen's own mind.

The chairman said, he could not put the resolution without adding a word of his own. When he saw Mr. Sen during his visit to England fourteen years ago his deep impression was, that he had never felt himself in contact with a more holy man. He had never felt towards any human being as he felt towards him. When the East sent such a representative to the West, he (the chairman) felt that we might well look to the East for religious light, and life, and warmth. He would not pronounce any judgment upon recent passages on Mr. Sen's conduct as a religious leader, which had provoked much comment, but he could not help saying that, as a religious teacher, he regarded him as one of the greatest men who had lived in our time.

The resolution was carried unanimously and the Secretary was instructed to forward copies not only to Mr. Sen's family, and to Mozoomdar, but to each of the Theistic Somajes of India.

At this point, Mr. Hopgood having to leave the meeting, the chair was taken by Mr. David Martineau."

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*The Evening Telegram*

(NEW YORK)

*Thursday, January 17, 1884.*KESHUB CHUNDER SEN'S "NEW DISPENSATION"  
OF INDIA

The death of Keshub Chunder Sen which was cabled January 8, was an event notable in the history of religious reformations. This eloquent and learned Hindoo had organized in Calcutta a new Native Church, which, though still small, was increasing constantly in numbers and was attracting the attention and engaging the respect of intelligent Christians everywhere.

The Brahma Somaj has been in existence about fifty years, and the founder of the New Dispensation claimed for it a life of progress and development, of which the New Dispensation itself is the latest and most glorious result. The new church is the old one rehabilitated, developed and perfected. It recognizes the four principal Scriptures of the world as its foundation—the *Rig Veda*, the Buddhist *Pitakas*, the Christian *Bible* and the Mahomedan *Koran*. The unity of the Godhead is the fundamental doctrine of the new church, and with this is embodied the unity of all earnest creeds,—Hindu, Buddhistic, Moslem and Christian. Keshub Chunder Sen made no pretension to supernaturalism, but he professed to have harmonized and unified all other dispensations by the divine synthesis, and to have discovered the method by which the apparent anomalies and contradictions of other



systems are to be brought into a logical unity of idea and method. All the previous systems are connected together in the economy of providence and it was reserved for him to discover the systematic evolution of thought, the development of religious life, just as science brings light and order out of chaos and darkness. There can be but one true science that explains material nature, and so there can be but one true science of dispensation which shows and explains the dealings of God to man throughout all ages in the matter of religion, and this true science of dispensation is his grand discovery. "We have found the science of dispensation at last," he triumphantly exclaims in his last anniversary lecture—"unity in multiplicity." Where others see only conclusion and anomaly, he sees order and continuity. Hinduism and Buddhism, Moslemism and Christianity are but parts of the divine scheme. It is the happy welding of them together that constitutes "the New Dispensation." Just as the New Testament is the logical consequence of the Old, so the New Dispensation is the logical consequence of all the systems of religion that have perplexed mankind by their diversity and contradictions up to the present. Nor is this all. Mr. Keshub Chunder Sen claims more for his church than this. "The New Dispensation is Christ's prophecy fulfilled. Jesus foretold and foreshadowed other Dispensations. He said the Comforter would come after Him, and guide the world into all truth." And in the New Dispensation he sees the fulfilment of this prophecy, "the realization of Christian and Pauline anticipations."

Although the divinity of Christ is not held in the *Church of the New Dispensation* as in the orthodox churches of Christianity, yet His person and teaching are spoken of with a reverence and devotion that can hardly be surpassed. A subjective divinity is allowed Him, but not an objective ; indeed it is plainly asserted that this subjective divinity was all that Christ claimed for himself. He was a partaker of the Divine nature, He was God-consciousness, not God Himself. But all believers are equally partakers of the Divine nature. "As for Christ," exclaims Mr. Sen, "we are surely among His honored ambassadors." And, again he speaks of the founders of the Church of the New Dispensation as Christ's Apostles in India. So that he takes no mean standing as a religious teacher, although disclaiming all supernatural power. It may be true that some of his followers revere him as something more than human, and honour him as an infallible Pope over the Church.

In Boston at the Arlington Church, on Sunday last, Rev. Brooke Herford delivered a sermon on Keshub Chunder Sen and the theistic movement in India. After recapitulating the more significant facts in the history of the earnest Hindoo teacher and his faith, he said :— "In 1866 Sen gave his famous lecture on Christ before 2,000 leading people of Calcutta. He claimed that the Europeans had not understood Christ and His teachings. Christ was, he said, an Oriental, and could be appreciated thoroughly only by those of his own race."

This lecture created a great stir throughout the religious world, and Sen immediately became famous both in his own country and abroad. In 1870 he came to England and preached in many of the important cities. Wherever he appeared his lofty, dignified appearance and his great intellectual power, which made him appear a king among men, produced a profound impression. After his return to India he continued his noble work, and to his care was intrusted the great hope of the religious life of India and its 180,000,000 people. One trembles when he thinks that this great leader has fallen, and yet, if his teachings rested upon a pure and enduring foundation, they must bear fruit, even though the leader is gone.

— v. 9.

REV. JOSEPH COOK

*Independent (American).*

# I

A heroic soldier of religious reform, a saint, a seer has passed into the world into which all men haste,

No Asiatic interested me as much as did Keshub Chunder Sen. I came near enough to him to understand something of his nature, his environment, his struggles, his triumphs, his defeats, his hopes. On no one born in India did I build more expectation than on him as to the future of reform among the educated circles of Hindustan. How noble he was ; how serious ; how worthy of spiritual leadership ; how intense ; how eloquent ; how prayerful ! I saw in his soul the Orien-

tal type, and was taught much by it, and had hoped to be taught more. The news from the Ganges that Keshub Chunder Sen is dead overwhelms me with a more profound sense of personal bereavement than I can now remember to have felt before at the departure of any public man. A most interesting and noble career ended at an age of less than forty-six. O, my brother, my brother, how lonely the world seems without thee !

Rammohun Roy never ceased to be a Brahmin. When he died at Bristol, England, in 1833, the sacred Brahminical thread was found around his shoulders. He was a vacillating adherent of a conservative form of Unitarianism. He was consistent in his opposition to idolatry ; but he never efficiently attacked caste. He instituted an agitation which led to the abolition of the burning of Hindu widows ; but he did not permit their re-marriage. He was a writer of much logical power, but inspired his associates with little spiritual fervor.

Debendranath Tagore, who re-organised the Brahmo Somaj, at Calcutta, after Rammohun Roy's death, was a man of devout and lofty soul ; but he did not wholly break with Hindu customs as to caste.

It is to Keshub Chunder Sen that India owes the most thorough opposition any of her native reformers has yet made to caste, child-marriages and enforced widowhood, as well as to idolatry, polytheism, pantheism and materialism in all their forms. When yet comparatively young and acting in closest fellowship with Debendranath Tagore, he demanded that only those

who had cast away the Brahminical sacred thread should be allowed to act as preachers in the Brahmo Somaj. This reform was not granted to him ; and, therefore, with some of the most earnest and progressive of the Brahmos, he seceded from the original society and founded in 1860 a new organization, which cut the last bonds that bound it to Brahminism. It was under his leadership that the Indian Reform Association was organized after his return from his visit to England in 1870. He stimulated discussion as to the evils of child-marriages. He broke with all the rules of orthodox Hindu society in favoring the re-marriage of widows, and marriages between persons of different castes. In the face of the bitterest opposition he secured from the Government of India a law legalizing such marriages. Only those who know how the topic of marriage is interwoven with the whole net-work of legal and social usages in India will appreciate the courage and the wisdom of this effort to engraft Occidental and Christian ideas as to the home and the family upon Oriental customs having the highest sanction of age and Brahminical approval.

But Keshub Chunder Sen was an orator as well as a reformer. In his earliest manhood it was the force and beauty of his public speech which first gave him influence as a leader. Oriental in his rhetoric, and too little given to theological study, he sometimes offended severe Occidental tastes by both his manner and matter ; but, as he grew more mature, he was becoming more balanced and massive. His best

productions have an almost classical grace and vigor. They are likely to have a long life among Brahmos of the progressive type; for they breathe the loftiest spirit of reform, of patriotism, and of religious aspiration. Once a year, in the latter portion of his life, he was accustomed to proclaim the principles of his society in an elaborate oration in the Town Hall at Calcutta. That great audience-room, holding from three to four thousand, was usually crowded when he appeared in it.

Keshub Chunder Sen was not a reformer and orator merely; he was also a religious seer. When his influence over his followers is closely analyzed it will be found that his deep communion with the unseen world was the chief source of the authority he was allowed to exercise among his friends and disciples. At a time when his supporters were becoming disheartened and disunited, he instituted daily devotional exercises for them in his own house. He led these services with such a spirit that schism was effectually overcome. Sometimes the exercises were three and five hours in duration. Any religious doctrine which was habitually impressed upon the minds of the worshippers in these assemblies for prayer was regarded as infallibly revealed to them by the Holy Spirit. This startling claim was the centre of the religious philosophy of the progressive Brahmo Somaj, as led by Keshub Chunder Sen. He held, indeed, that the spirit of the prophets must be subject to the prophets; but he regarded inspiration as quite possible in our day.

He emphasized in every way the truths of reason and Scripture concerning the Holy Spirit. His religion he called Eclectic Theism, or the New Dispensation of the Spirit. It was undoubtedly his most sacred conviction that he was himself in some sense inspired as a teacher of this New Dispensation.

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*The Independent.*

II

Joseph Cook has, on another page, expressed our grief at the death of the great Hindu reformer, Babu Keshub Chunder Sen. He was one of the earth's saints, brave before men and very humble before God. He was Christian, though he hardly knew it, a devout follower of Jesus Christ, whose teachings he believed had been the greatest blessing India could receive. He had, what all the world's highest souls must have at some time, a deep sense of sin and its need of forgiveness; and this brought him into vital relations to God in his own personal experience, and as a teacher of religion. He had, what our Western faith so often loses, a deep assurance of the indwelling Spirit of God, working in him to know, to will, and to do of God's good pleasure. In our cautious fashion, we refuse to separate between our own mental action and the influence of God impressed upon our souls. He had no such difficulty; he was as sure of the divine indwelling as any prophet of old. His followers were not many; but his influence in the more intelligent upper classes of Hindu society was

immense. There has been great difference of opinion as to his real character and influence, a considerable section of the missionaries regarding him as a hypocrite, or a wild fanatic, or both. We should have some fear that, since his death, he would be almost deified, were it not that the reformation which he led has been accompanied by an enlightened culture and scholarship which will prevent what might have taken place a few years ago. We suspect, however, that his influence dead will be greater than his influence living. He may be counted among the prophets, like Moses and Mohammed, through whom the Lord has given special revelation of his truth. And it may not be too much to say that such a career as his shows that God is not far from many who, born outside of Christian relations, have felt after God, if haply they might find him.

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JAMES M. PHILLIPS, M.D.

*Missionary at Midnapore, India.*

*Independent.*

### III

On Tuesday morning, January 8th, at his cheerful quiet Lily Cottage, in Calcutta, died Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, the Hindu Reformer and founder of the Somaj of India, the most liberal of the native theistic societies. His health had been infirm for nearly a year and the Summer months in a Himalayan retreat afforded him little relief. His last days were days of great physical suffering, borne with the utmost patience



and resignation. His devoted son-in-law, the Maharajah of Cuch-Bihar, stood ministering at his side to the last, and many beloved disciples and friends gathered around the couch of the dying minister.

The funeral was conducted according to the rules of the *New Samhita*, of which he was the author. The remains were laid out upon a sandalwood cot decorated with roses, jasmines and marigolds, and viewed by hundreds of his countrymen. After the gentlemen retired from the domestic chapel, where the body lay in state, native ladies were admitted. As the bier was lifted the funeral chant, "*Jai Jai Sachidanandan*," was raised by the bearers, and caught up by the multitude outside. The procession halted at the Brahmo Mandir, where the voice of the minister had been heard so often and at the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj, the youngest of the theistic societies, where native ladies sprinkled flowers on the bier. On the bank of the Ganges a funeral pyre of sandalwood was erected, and upon it the remains were cremated in the presence of thousands of Hindus, Mohammedans, and others. The ashes, it is said, will be interred in the little chapel adjoining Lily Cottage.

Letters of condolence are pouring in upon the afflicted family, and a telegram from the Secretary of State in England to the Viceroy and Governor-General of India brings a message of tenderest sympathy from the heart of our noble Queen Victoria to the bereaved household in Lily Cottage. Public meetings have been held in Calcutta and elsewhere in honour of the departed

reformer, and a fund is being raised for erecting an appropriate monument to his memory. I am unable to say, what form this memorial may take, but cannot doubt that it will meet with the hearty support of all creeds and classes throughout this vast empire ; for his death is recognized as a national loss.

In Keshub Chunder Sen British India loses one of her own best noblemen. He died at the early age of forty-five ; but for fully twenty-five years he had been thinking and speaking on religious and public themes. While yet a student in the Hindu School he was President of a society for social improvement, and on one occasion, at a public meeting, an English missionary in the chair, he moved the following resolution : "Resolved that this society cultivate *habits of prayer*." Thus early did he give promise of devotion to duty and blessing to his native land. His soul seemed ever open to the light, and it welcomed the light, come from whatever quarter or source. His moral earnestness impressed all thoughtful men ; and I venture to say no other person in the Hindu community has either attracted or held the number of admirers and friends he has for twenty years among our best public men, missionaries included. At the public meeting in Calcutta, a Scotch missionary seconded the resolution looking to a public memorial, and said that, upon his coming to India twenty-two years ago, Dr. Duff charged him to send him special information about Keshub Chunder Sen, he being then more interested in this rising reformer than in any other single individual in India.

There are two points which men may always differ in relation to our departed friend. One is this : What was the secret of his power over men ? And the other : What was his attitude toward evangelical Christianity ? Concerning the first, I think those who knew him best will agree that it was his loving heart that drew men to him. Not of high caste, not of Brahmin birth, not of extraordinary intellectual grasp or grip, not the child of fortune, as regards either wealth or social standing, he yet reached men's hearts, and moved their lives as few men have in India, if, indeed, any other man, since the day of his distinguished forerunner, Raja Ram Mohun Roy. And I cannot doubt that the secret of his love for men was his devout love for God. No one could talk an hour with this earnest man without being impressed with this. As his own heart was drawn Godward in fond, clinging devotion, it was also drawn manward in beautiful benevolence and sincere sympathy. During the fourteen years I knew him I found ample proof of what I write to-day. I enjoyed meeting him in Lily Cottage, where we always conversed freely in Bengali, and where he often opened his heart to his friends. His English addresses were wonderful in their way, and brought him much praise ; but it was in his own Mandir, near Amherst Street, on Sabbath evenings, that one found him most himself, most at home, and most earnest and impressive. Rarely were white faces seen there ; for the service was entirely in Bengali or Sanskrit. The singing used to charm me as no other native melody could. The prayers of the minister

touched and taught my heart, and his discourse, as he spoke sitting, and with eyes shut, in true oriental mode, stirred and soothed me by turn and sent me away with real refreshing. It was his heart speaking to you every time; and the tears freely flowing down my cheeks attested his sincerity. His soul took strong hold of the *Motherhood of God*, as some old writers have called it. His last call was that of a child for its mother; and an old friend has well said: "None that heard it can forget his last prayer to 'Ma! Ma!' the cry of profoundest *bhakti*, and loving faith in the only Helper."

As a lecturer on religious and popular themes Keshub Babu had hardly a peer in Bengal, so far as interesting and inspiring his own countrymen are concerned. But his work as a publicist and reformer, his brave efforts in behalf of widow-marriage, and his strong advocacy of sounder excise legislation, in order to arrest the spread of intemperance in India, all pointed to his warm and loving heart as the spring of every earnest endeavor for his country's weal. The women of India will honor him as a patron saint. He was, moreover, more than an iconoclast or publicist or reformer in its commonly accepted sense. He carried his native land on his heart, and in his every prayer, as in all his patient painstaking, India was ever uppermost, ever dearest. In this bent and burden of his life he has bequeathed a precious legacy to his countrymen, which they do well to honor and cherish.

As to Keshub Babu's attitude toward Christianity, I must say unhesitatingly that, while finding fault with

some of the forms in which he saw it illustrated, he nevertheless drank deeply of its spirit. While he never claimed to be a Christian, he sincerely adored Christ ; and, notwithstanding his superabundant metaphors and his pet theory of eclecticism in religion, it was as clear as sunlight that, over and above all his reasoning, the purity, the power, and the preciousness of our holy faith asserted itself, making and moulding his thought, and fashioning and finishing his life as nothing else could. In his health and in his illness no book was dearer to him than the New Testament, and the words of Jesus fed his thirsty soul with the water of life. Christianity, in all lands, has ever achieved broader conquests than those marked or measured by the lines of the Church. Her ample benediction to India stretches far beyond all Church lines, all missionary posts and plans, and sinks deeper into human life and labor than our bristling statistics can detect or compute. Without the faith of Kiernander and Carey, of Marshman and Henry Martyn, of Duff and Wenger and Welland our Bengal had not known her Ram Mohan Roy or her Keshub Chunder Sen. Only the All-father above can see how powerfully these teeming millions are being moved and moulded by the blessed Gospel of His Son, our only Saviour.

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THE FAMOUS HINDU REFORMER  
 PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF KESHUB  
 CHUNDER SEN  
 BY HERR BANDMAN

*San*

On my arrival here I was much shocked by the information of the death of Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, a man who took a leading part in the progressive enlightenment of the East Indian nation, and who is not unknown to the rest of the intelligent world. Having enjoyed his personal friendship for a considerable period, and having spent many pleasant hours with him, it may, perhaps, be interesting to some of your readers to hear more of this remarkable man. You must also attribute it to an impulse of paying a small tribute to my lost friend that I venture to trespass upon your valuable space.

Keshub Chunder Sen was the most learned and enlightened native in East India, I may go further and say in the entire Orient. With the grand, imposing, athletic figure, a noble bearing he combined an expressive dignity which reminded one of the patrician Roman. He was fully six feet high, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, of slightly olive complexion, mild, eloquent eyes, firm set lips, genial chin, black moustache, and long black hair, which hung carelessly over a well-developed forehead. He was my beau ideal of an "Othello make up," and I told him that I would bring his face on the stage when I should play that part. He laughed and

came to see it (as he was never absent from any of my Shakespearean impersonations). After the performance he came into my dressing room, and spoke highly of the acting. "But what did you think of my make up?" I asked. "If it was meant for me," he answered, "I can only say that I could not see myself in it, for I beheld a handsome man." But the Babu was too modest, for he certainly was the handsomest man I saw in India.

He spoke the English language without the slightest accent, and he possessed that rarest of all gifts, the art of conversation.

In his frequent lectures against Brahman fetichism, and in favor of the movement which he called the New Dispensation, he kept his audiences, composed of Europeans and educated natives, spell bound. He was versatile to a degree, and could discuss any subject, showing a keen and penetrating understanding in all his views.

As with most of the educated Hindus, Shakespeare was his favourite topic, and in that subject he was a perfect master. I have greatly benefited in frequent conversations by his transcendental expositions, and looked with pleasure into his inspiring eloquent eyes, which sparkled with oriental enthusiasm. In religion he was more Christian than Brahman, and although father-in-law of the Maharajah Cooch Behar, one of the most intelligent, charming, and enlightened Princes in India, \* \* he (Keshub Chunder Sen) still adhered to the customs of his Hindu fellow-citizens in dress, mode of life and domestic matters. \* \* \* In the midst of his

triumphs he was called to the great field of rest, where we all one day have to go. We shall see him no more, and I presume his mortal body was given over to that dismal spot on the Ganges where it was burnt with sandalwood and where his relatives had to light the pile and do the last honor to his remains. How many thousands must have been within the sombre lofty walls ! How many hundreds of thousands must have wept and sorrowed that day over their loss ! They may well weep, for with him departed the best and truest friend the native India ever had, and the staunchest adherent of the English crown. The Queen of England knew this well, and sent him a volume of the Consort's life, with her picture and autograph attached. Peace to his ashes, for he was a great and good man, and pushed India a century ahead.

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### CASSELL'S MAGAZINE

"The visit paid this summer to England by Keshub Chunder Sen has had two very natural motives. The first to engage the interest of the English public in his work in India, and notably to obtain from the Government the legislation of Brahmo marriages, which as we have already remarked, hold at present the paradoxical position of being illegal because they are not idolatrous. The second aim of Keshub has been to acquaint himself with English religious thought and to come in contact with minds holding views either agreeing with or differing from his own. How far these objects will have



been gained by his journey we cannot of course, pretend to say. He has been warmly received in London by men best able to judge of his position, politically and theologically—by Lord Lawrence, and the Duke of Argyll, and Dean Stanley; and the meeting held to welcome him in the Hanover Square Rooms presented the very pleasant spectacle of the mini-stries of nine different persuasions collected in concord on the platform. At present he is visiting some of the great towns where no little interest is felt in his addresses.

A few words of personal gossip in conclusion must close our account of this very remarkable man. The Sen family form one of a number of houses constituting a special caste, second in rank only to the Brahmins, and reckoning up an ancestry of eight centuries to the secretaries of a mission well known in Hindu story. That Keshub himself should thus have a pedigree as long as that of any Norman noble in England seems every way fitting, since it would be hard to show a man of any race more distinctly bearing the marks of good blood and gentle breeding. His countenance is singularly noble, with features cast as if in bronze by a greek sculptor, contrasting in this respect most remarkably with that of the majority of Hindus to be seen in England. His manners have also not so much of the ordinary Eastern softness and somewhat exaggerated courtesy, as of the easy inborn dignity and simplicity of a wellbred man of high European birth. In a word, and in the most strictly conventional sense, Keshub Chunder Sen is a gentleman—a small word for one

whom it is very possible future generations may rank as the apostle of India, but yet worth somewhat even applied to him. Keshub is thirty-two years of age and has been for sometime married, having four children, who are of course, left at present with his wife in Calcutta. In figure he is tall and of good bearing, well set off by his somewhat clerical long, straight black silk coat, and black Soutane.

Turning to matters of more importance, Keshub we think, may fairly be described as an eloquent preacher, differing from most popular orators. However, his eloquence does not consist in rhetorical flourishes or numerous metaphors ; nor yet in the fortunate introduction of sonorous texts and favourite quotations. Still less is there anything in his discourses approaching to rant or exaggeration of sentiment. Their power lies in the simple appropriateness of the language to the thought. As the thought itself is elevated and warm with fervour, faith and piety, the mere expression of it in suitable terms constitutes something which is superior to most of the oratory which goes by the name. A calm and winning mode of delivery, a good voice and a reverent manner of course heighten these advantages in the pulpit. His command over the English language is probably the most perfect which has ever been attained by a foreigner. Scarcely a tone of pronunciation of a word or the turn of an idiom, in a whole sermon betrays to the ear that it is not an Anglo-Saxon but a Hindoo who is pouring forth such easy flow, one forcible period after another for an hour together.

The merit of Keshub's preaching does not lie in the direction which has been followed by the chief religious guides of our own country of late years. The comparisons between him and them, which some of his hearers have instituted, have therefore been altogether unjust. On his first addressing a London congregation it would appear that many persons flocked to hear him, expecting him to deal with the special doubts and difficulties of English speculative theology with greater knowledge and deeper insight than the profoundest thinkers who have made such subjects the study of their lives, amid all the advantages of the most rarefied philosophical atmosphere in Europe. Such an anticipation was quite on a par with that of Voltaire and his comrades, who expected to find in the Zend Avesta a philosophy and theology which should put Plato to shame and make the Gospels seem poor. For a man, yet young, to have made the stupendous ascension out of rank idolatry and polytheism into the light of a pure and holy theism, steering clear of all the superstitions in his path, and yet grasping at every spiritual lesson of the prophets of all lands—this is assuredly an achievement enough for the honour of one soul. To expect Keshub Chunder Sen to have had leisure or power also to master the difficulties of modern metaphysical theology, or Biblical criticism, or European ecclesiastical history, is simply absurd. His greatness lies in quite a different direction from that of our teachers and thinkers, whose powers would probably prove comparatively useless to do the Indian reformer's proper work in his own

land. It is not in the region of the intellect (albeit his intellectual abilities are every way respectable), but in the realm of the religious sentiment itself that Keshub Chunder Sen is so highly gifted; it is as one who speaks out of the fulness of clear faith in things unseen and he utters words of power which sway the hearts of his countrymen, and touch even *our own*, when we consent to forget for a moment our controversies and philosophies.

"Great minds receive truth in themselves." And so it would indeed seem that there are some souls to whom the light of divine things comes, not so much through the broken media of other men's words, and traditions, and books, as through their own direct consciousness. All real religion which transcends the purile stage is, of course, in a measure a direct communion of the finite and infinite spirit; but it is in those rare and happy cases where the largely receptive, wholly faithful soul imbibes fully the Divine lesson that we see clearly what it means to be "taught of God." Men who have so learned theology do not need to argue or make display of erudition and logic. Their work is "to speak which they do know, and testify that which they have seen;" and the ratification of their testimony is in their hearers' soul or nowhere. The greatest nay, the only benefit they can do us is thus to communicate what they have been taught, and share with us experiences which to us have been dim and vague, but to them clear and definite; and so to enable us to interpret to ourselves our own consciousness. In these ways Keshub is a true

teacher. His fervent piety, the transparent honesty of his character inspire sympathy and command confidence. Probably there is somewhat in his Eastern simplicity and absence of self-consciousness which makes it more possible for him than for a European to allow his hearers to see into his heart, and gain that aid to devotion which is much oftener the result of sympathetic feeling than of illuminated thought. *More than one who know him have said that they could better understand Christ's childlike confidence in God since they have seen him."*

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## PUNCH

"(This great Indian reformer is invited to a tea meeting by the British and Foreign Unitarian Society at the Hanover Square Rooms),

" Who on earth, of living men,  
Is Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen ?  
I doubt if even one in ten  
Knows Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen.  
Have you heard if so, where and when  
Of Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen ?  
The name surpasses human ken—  
Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen,  
To write it almost spoils my pen ;  
Look—Baboo—Keshub—Chunder—Sen '  
From fair Cashmere's white peopled glen  
Comes Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen ?  
Big as ox, or small as wren,  
Is Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen ?  
Let's beard this " lion " in his den—  
This Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen.

So come to tea and muffins then,  
With Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen."

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### SATURDAY REVIEW

"Keshub Chunder Sen is an example of what western and especially English civilisation is making of native gentlemen in Bengal. He has thrown himself into the study of English religion and English books till he has thoroughly made himself at home with the ideas and general ways of thinking at least of our generation, and has come to speak and write English with vigour and eloquence. He is earnest in announcing his religious views, and his earnestness is of the English rather than the oriental type. He appears before us the spokesman the leader, almost the prophet of a religious reform which we are told is extensively affecting native society in Bengal and the peculiarity of this religious reform is said to be that it is not destructive and negative, but anti-sceptical and constructive and while treating Christianity with much reverence and freely using it as a source of materials, it does not start from or hold of Christianity but finds in man, as he is under the present circumstances of his condition and history, a fresh and uncorrupted basis for religious faith and life. This movement, or association, or form of belief, or whatever be the right name for the thing, is called the Brahmo Somaj.

The lectures appear to have created excitement in England. They are, as we have said, remarkable

productions for a man whose native language is not English and whose native language was an oriental one. It was to be expected, from his eclectic position and his twofold relation to England and India, that he would be large-hearted, sympathetic and just ; but there is more than this. With a manly straightforwardness and manly warmth, there is a grave and refined appreciation of what is spiritually elevated, noble and pure. Whatever may be our estimate of him as a religious reformer of India and Christendom, it is at least satisfactory that, whatever may be said against our rule in India, types of character like this are the direct product of it, and that without it they would have been impossible."

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### THE SPECTATOR

"That Keshub in this generation, should have promulgated any doctrine inviting Hindoos to become converts to Christianity may reasonably be doubted; but any spontaneous movement which stirs the sluggish waters of Hindoo thought, or gives to the awakened native intellect a right direction, must surely be welcome. To brave native prejudices, however revolting, to disregard social scruples, however absurd, to cross the dark ocean, and to provoke a vast amount of malice and misrepresentation, requires no small amount of moral courage, and we are glad therefore that one who has despised these dangers from no spirit of social advancement or professional gain, should receive in England an intelligent support at the hands of divines and senators, which cannot fail to add a fresh incentive to his exertions, and to give hope of valuable and lasting results."

## THE UNITARIAN HERALD

" We doubt whether a more interesting religious meeting has ever been held than that which at Hanover Square Rooms, on Tuesday week, gave the keynote to the tone in which this distinguished man (Keshub Chunder Sen) will be received in England. At that meeting the foremost religious thought and feeling of the West came face to face, joined hands in friendliest greeting, with the purest and most hopeful religious movement which for many hundred years has arisen in the East.

*The meeting was a singularly broad one.* Churchmen, Unitarians, Baptists, Independents, Wesleyans, Jews sat side by side. We do not think so much of Dean Stanley's or Mr. Martineau's presence, because they are of those, who, as a matter of course, sympathise with a gathering of this kind, but Dr. Mullens and Mr. Samuel Sharpe, Dr. Prestrail and Rabbi Marks sitting in a friendly attitude to each other, and all speaking in the same direction on a matter which really touches very deeply the existence of a religious element common to all churches and sects. This was the very "Free Christian Union", which direct organisations for the purpose have vainly attempted to secure. Nor was it an outburst of kindly feeling in the heated atmosphere of a special occasion which would not bear the morning's reflection. The *English Independent* writes of it thus fairly and frankly :

" The Unitarian party have taken him (Keshub Chunder Sen) warmly by the hand, but it has happily not been left to them



alone to show kindness to a man placed in such an interesting position or sympathy with a movement which may largely affect the religious and social condition of India. With the Unitarians he is at present most in sympathy, but they had too much good sense to attempt to confine his survey of English Christianity within the very restricted limits of this sect, and the credit of having conceived and convened, the interesting meeting of Tuesday night, in which religious parties met on "a broader platform than has perhaps ever before been constructed in England," belongs to them.

This is as it should be. The position we hold in the matter is truly appreciated, as also are the feelings which every unitarian must entertain on the subject. We should regret as deeply as our contemporary any narrowness in the view which Mr. Sen is to have of what Christianity is doing in this land of ours. None will admit more readily than we how very small a proportion of the noble efforts which with all its weakness and defects, Christianity does work out, are contained within the limits of our own church-life. Let him see all there is to see."

That Keshub Chunder Sen will be an acute open eyed observer no one can doubt. There is a tone of manly independence about his speech which cannot but produce a deep impression on all who read it. This is no man who can be patronised and hoodwinked by flattering attentions. He comes as an independent man, asking nothing at our hands. A genuine man sees the reality of things ; and as Keshub Chunder Sen has come over to try and see Christianity in its common working for himself we doubt not he will see it.

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## WEEKLY DESPATCH

“ \* \* \* \* But thoroughly acceptable as such evidence may be of the momentous fact of a hearty reconciliation and thorough good understanding between Englishmen and natives of India—of a realisation of our own prophecy that India eventually may be able to defend, and in great measure to govern itself in a common alliance and allegiance with ourselves, the speech of Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen, on his reception at the Hanover Square Rooms by the heads of our liberal religious parties, is fraught with yet more certainty of satisfaction. We may soon dismiss the religious portion of the speech, although its sentiment is the basis of the entire agreement between the East and the West of the Queen's dominion. Keshub Chunder Sen is justified in asserting “ the spirit of Christ, India, will one day accept.” He begs of his clerical and missionary hearers to leave off pestering the Hindoo with dogmas and doctrines. He laughs at the confusion of opposite pretensions in proselytising. He puts the question in politer terms: but, in fact, he wishes to inquire which of the rival empiricisms the Hindoos are expected to put their trust in. His very serious hearers cannot help joining in the joke. They are jested into the tacit admission that India must judge for itself. And this Keshub Chunder Sen claims to the full. We are Asiatics he says—Orientals; we are accustomed to the reasonings of the Bible, and the very manner of putting them. He might have said, you Scotch Calvinists and you English logicians, you cannot even read with intelligence

what is native to us. "The spirit of Christianity comes to us as something being natural to the native heart ; " you send it to us as something " in a foreign and repulsive form." "Leave us to ourselves, and let us study the Bible ourselves." If the most bigotted have any real faith in their own creeds, anything beyond an obstinate, selfish and arrogant claim of dictation, they can ask nothing else or beyond this."

### ENGLISH INDEPENDENT

"We wish the time is opportune and the task is needful to appreciate the work, this religious teacher (Keshub Chunder Sen) has done, and the relation his work bears to our past missionary effort and ought to bear to our future missionary effort in India. Keshub Chunder Sen is a reformer of a reformation. Rajah Ram Mohun Roy founded the "Brahmo Somaj" in 1830, upon the foundation of what he conceived to be the pure theism of the early Vedas. His successor Debendra Nath Tagore gathered this body of worshippers into a strict association with a definite theistic creed and moral code. He also, after he obtained certain knowledge that the Vedas, along with other purer doctrines, inculcated pantheism, transmigration and annihilation of the soul, disavowed their authority, and proclaimed the intuitions of the human soul, as the only revelations of God and spiritual truth. Keshub Chunder Sen was an ardent disciple of this creed and Church. To his honour, however, and under the inspiration of a higher moral conception of religious faith, Keshub Chunder Sen protested against idolatrous

rites and caste distinctions, and urged the Calcutta Brahmo Somaj to abjure and renounce them. He could not carry with him the sympathies of his brethren. Their reforms were more speculative and sentimental than practical. So Keshub Chunder Sen is a reformer among them, and with a few enthusiastic young men he seceded and formed a separate society called "The Brahmo Somaj of India" with a view of comprehending within it all the Somajes of the country. The sincerity and zealous consistency of Keshub Chunder Sen and his associates was accompanied, as might be expected, with yet higher and intenser religious conviction than prevailed in the older Brahmo Somaj from which he seceded, and which is known as the "Calcutta Brahmo Somaj"—convictions which bring him much nearer to the faith and life of Church of Christ."

We confess that we are glad that Keshub Chunder Sen visits England under the auspices of the "Unitarian Association;" for although we believe in a *deeper sense* than the Rev. James Martineau indicated that a genuine oriental development of Christianity will have much to teach Western Churches. We do conceive in the present disintegrate and rationalised state of the Unitarian body, Keshub Chunder Sen has spiritual truth to impart to them which they, though professedly Christian, have lost, or are prodigally dissipating. Keshub Chunder Sen in India combats intellectual rationalism, which destroys religious faith. Further, he has sought to reform and exalt the Brahmo Somaj of Calcutta by infusing more devotional enthusiasm into their organisa-

tion and religious services, and more active zeal and sincerity into the work of propagandism and of antagonism to the idolatrous customs of their country ; and in both respects, specially in the first, we think he may exercise a salutary influence upon the Unitarian body. There are a few Unitarians who stand upon his level, and will co-operate with him ; but as a body, it is too plain, that Unitarians have been distracted and palsied by the critical negations of modern rationalism. So far as they have evinced much energy of late, it has been to quicken and propagate that very rationalism which was destroying their own unity and employing out their own faith. Now a *constructive and impulsive faith like that of Keshub Chunder Sen may reveal to them a higher life and mission than feeding and spreading fever and trouble of endless doubt.*"

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### THE INQUIRER

In an article by Captain Trotter, on " British India under the Crown," we find the following noteworthy passage on the religious progress of India, which illustrates the great influence which the Brahmo Somaj has already exercised :—

" For some years past the latter movement (Brahmo Somaj) seems to have made most way, under the leadership of the young and gifted Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, fit heir to the mantle worn forty years ago by Ram Mohun Roy. Step by step the original revolt against the corrupt Brahmanism of the Puranas has

led up to a religious system in which the Christ of the Gospels and the ethics of St. Paul play prominent part. The last rag of old use and want flung aside by Keshub Chunder's followers when a few years ago they forswore all observance of caste rules. His lectures in India and his recent utterances in this country show how thoroughly he has steeped himself in the spirit of the Christian scriptures while steadily rejecting the main dogmas of Christian theology. The Brahmos may already be numbered by thousands."

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## ASIATIC

"Brahmoism is indeed a grand effort of iconoclasm. That it was sure to come at no distant time, any one who has watched the transition states of the Hindu mind has for some years past been confident. The gross idol worship encouraged by the priests could not sustain the shocks of the secular education which was gaining ground among the people. As to our missionaries, much as we honour them, we might almost say, that this so-called "religious reform" has advanced in spite of them. Their zeal has overleapt their discretion. Their cry has been not merely, no surrender, but 'no compromise.' They have cried for 'the whole thing or nothing' and they have got too much of the latter.

We are rejoiced therefore to perceive that in England such men as Dean Stanley and Lord Lawrence welcome this Theist reformer (Keshub Chunder Sen) from Bengal as one who is doing much to prepare the way for

Christianity. Or, if this be not accomplished in due time, it is surely a great thing, in the interests of morality and humanity, to sweep away all the prevailing indecencies and cruelties of idol worship.

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## GRAPHIC

It is surely a significant sign that at a time when the church of England is disquieted by the dissensions of Ritualist and Rationalist, and when the Roman Church is for giving her thunderbolt anathemas to hurl at all who doubt her infallibility, there should come a man from heathen India, the cradle of mythology, the land of caste, the home of superstition and fanaticism, to *teach enlightened Europe* the virtue of toleration, the beauty of morality, the unity of truth and the brotherhood of humanity. The religious reformer (Keshub Chunder Sen) is certainly one of the most remarkable men of the age.

The faith of Keshub Chunder Sen though strongly in harmony with many of the New Testament teachings, entirely rejects the theological basis of Christianity. Like English and American Unitarianism, he considers the character and teachings of Christ as beyond comparison admirable and exemplary, but refuses to believe in the divinity of His person. "He (like all other prophets) is a God-man, an incarnation of God, not the divine nature in mortal form ; but simply God manifest in humanity ; not God made man, but God *in* man. Christ does not come to us as God the Father, our Ruler and Saviour in human form. He is not an intercessor, or one

who strives to appease, an angry deity. We do not care to believe in the outward and dead Nazarene; but we do care to assimilate the spirit of Christ to our souls. We must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the spiritual Christ, and thus incorporate his principles of faith, sacrifice, love, godliness, into our spiritual constitutions." The Brahmo Somaj has so greatly prospered under the guidance of Keshub Chunder Sen that from an obscure sect Brahmoism has rapidly become a comprehensive religion *which is likely to influence men of various races and civilizations.*

Fate has ever decreed that misconception and jealousy should attend the footsteps of genius, and the career of Keshub Chunder Sen is no exception to the rule. In 1856, when lecturing in Calcutta upon our Redeemer, he fervently and eloquently expressed his reverence for his character and teachings. Many, both Christians and Hindus, at once concluded that he was about to embrace Christianity, though he had distinctly told them that his object was to show the "moral excellence" of Christ, apart from theological wranglings, and when, sometime after, he again lectured on "Great Men" giving his views of the prophetic function more fully, they declared that he had retracted because he feared the displeasure of his countrymen. His moral reputation has been much endangered by this false impression. In this latter lecture he speaks of great men (great prophets) as parts of the same divine economy; and though Christ the prince of prophets, effected greater wonders and



did more good than any other, and deserves, therefore, our profoundest reverence, yet we must not refuse honour to any link in the chain of prophets which preceded and which follows him.

This explanation of his views led to another misconception of a different kind. He was thought to consider himself a link in this chain, and he was accused by some, of aspiring to be worshipped as an incarnation of God having power to save sinners."

No more mistaken estimate of Keshub's disposition and character could possibly have been made. For his modesty is so extreme that in writing the history of his church, while giving full honours to others, he hardly alludes to himself, and he even publishes his writings anonymously. It is satisfactory to know that his denial, and the defences of some friends, have almost entirely eradicated these calumnies. It may be regarded as a proof of genuineness of his modesty as well as of his general good sense, that when he observed that the eloquence of the preachers and the length of the services, resulted in a species of ecstasy in the congregations, he thought proper to caution them against the extremity of religious emotion, recommending that to exercise self-control best, they should become more spiritual voluptuaries. Were it his ambition to be regarded as a demi-god, his plain course would have been to encourage, rather than check, this tendency in his followers.

Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen is a native of Calcutta, where his wife and four children are awaiting his return,

He is in his 33rd year, and belongs to the physician caste, the highest caste in India but one. But as he holds that all men are brethren, he looks on caste as an obstacle to progress. He is a strict vegetarian and teetotaler, abstaining both from animal food and from alcoholic drinks. He is a man of lovely happy temperament, and the more he is known the better he is liked. Piety, purity, and benevolence are the distinguishing traits of his character.

Such is the man who has won the ear of thousands of the intelligent Bengali youth, and who is establishing "Churches of God" throughout his native country. He advocates the abolition of idolatry, and the adoption of a belief in one God, the everlasting Father and Friend of mankind. He desires to promote education, to get rid of caste, and to imbue his countrymen, millions of whom are sunk in ignorance, superstition, and licentiousness, with a higher moral life."

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### SOUTH LONDON CHRONICLE

A thunderbolt in a summer sky might as reasonably have been looked for in Stanferd Street last Sunday evening, as a missionary in Hindu India to Christian England. Human life is full of contrasts and paradoxes, but the greatest of all is the appearance of a teacher from an eastern dependancy, and it has got to be seen how far England can appreciate the wisdom which comes from East. Mr. Sen is entitled to be heard with courteous patience, because we have long asked his

fellow-countrymen to listen to us, and we cannot complain so long as we hold the right in our own hands to award to his efforts the same scanty success afforded to our missions from England. The mission of Mr. Sen to England is to study our religious life, to be able to estimate the spiritual forces in existence amongst us at home, and to detect, if he can, how the existence conflicting needs harmonises with a spiritual life. Baffled in India many attempt to understand the co-ordinate existence of the Church and Nonconformity, of High Church, Low Church, and Broad Church, of Wesleyans, congregationalists and Baptists of Trinitarians and Unitarians ; of Episcopacy in England, Presbyterianism in Scotland, and Catholicism in Ireland, all of them represented by missionaries and chaplains in India, Mr. Sen comes to see us at home as we are. We hope he will not look into the temple and the exchange together, for if he does he may discover, that the mammon of unrighteousness is the most potent force in England, and the Church stand second as an agent in the active life of England. There are some features in our national life which we may hope will escape the eye of the acute Hindu gentleman, for he could, if he were disposed to be a critic, be severe without being censorious, and send some reports of our condition which would hardly flatter our reputation.

It is as well therefore that we receive Mr. Sen in a spirit of kindly courtesy, and listen to him with tolerant forbearance. We may not be able to agree with him, but at least we may be taught by an Eastern mind. For

we are a little too much accustomed to forget that the scriptures were written by oriental pens, and addressed to oriental minds. We may have lost the clue to the meaning ; we may not be able always to grasp the lessons taught by Eastern allegory, and in our severely reasoning habits we may be a little too proud of the logical faculty which leads us to conclusions that appear to be irresistible. There were many persons who sat in Stamford Street Chapel on Sunday evening, who had never before comprehended to the full that the mountains to be removed by a grain of faith like the mustard seed were mountains of difficulty. It required a very large amount of faith to be practised by the literal practical minds of Englishmen, to enable them to believe that they could remove mountains, and that nothing should be impossible to the man of faith.

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We are indebted to Mr. Sen for the enterprise which has brought him to England with a message of Christian peace."

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### BIRMINGHAM POST

The following curious correspondences appeared in the Birmingham Post :—

SIR,—Having been on the continent, I did not see till yesterday that there is to be a grand ovation given to the above gentleman (Keshub Chunder Sen) by the Christians of Birmingham without regard to sect. The gentlemen who attended the preliminary meeting resolve to express their sympathy with the great Hindoo in

his religious work ! What is the world or rather the church coming to ! Who are they that joined in this resolution ! Except one or two unitarians, at whom we should not wonder doing such a thing, they were ministers to whom Evangelical Christians, like myself look up for sound teaching. And who is this hero they are going to worship ? A man who is not simply an enquirer after the way of salvation, but one who has read and studied all about the blessed Savior, and openly denies that He is God, and that His atonement is the only way of pardon. A man who said lately in London, " You need never think that the intelligent of my countrymen will receive your sectarian dogmas which are so opposed to each other. Leave us the Bible and keep your missionaries at home." This is the man that our leading ministers are going to stand up and publicly express sympathy with. To the honor of the clergy, be it said that they had no part in the thing. I say Mr. Sen ought to be wept over for his blasphemy. We believe he is teaching damnable error and leading thousands to hell, our ministers themselves being judges and yet they get up this glorification for him. If they merely expressed sympathy with his opposition to caste, I could understand it ; but with his " religious work," if our missionaries are right, he must be awfully wrong ; and what I would suggest is that we meet together and pray that the Gospel be put into his heart and that he be converted.

Yours etc.,  
W. TROMAN.

SIR,—Your correspondent, W. Truman, being alarmed at the idea of the ovation which is to be given to Keshub Chunder Sen by the Christians of Birmingham, asks, in well-feigned surprise, " what is the world or rather the Church coming to ! " Permit me to reply, that I think the world, or rather the sensible part of it, is at last coming to the grand conviction that truth is not confined to any sect ; that bigotry and intolerance are foolish, as well as unchristian ; and that religion is not a system of creeds and formularies, but an active beneficent principle, whose purpose is rather to improve the heart than to perplex the mind. If truth, purity and goodness have any value and if the Scriptures are correct in their definitions of " true and undefiled religion," then Keshub Chunder Sen is truly religious and he is leading his followers heavenward, notwithstanding his non-belief in a dogma which our own Milton, Newton, and Locke did not hold.

Yours faithfully,

T. R. MASSON.

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### GLASGOW HERALD

" Can any good besides rupees, rice, opium, cotton, tigers' skins, and a few other peculiarities of tropical merchandise, come out of India ? Babu Keshub Chunder Sen appeared in the City Hall on Monday evening, and answered the question in a manner which elicited the hearty unanimous applause of some four thousand full

grown citizens of Glasgow. If that applause was anything more than a mere explosion of breath, it meant that the Hindoo Reformer was regarded as speaking sound sense. Nor did the approbation accorded to Baboo Sen emanate only from the lay element in the community, but from clergymen of many shades of theological opinion. The leading churches of Scotland were represented on the platform by ministers who seemed to look upon the eloquent successor of Rajah Rammohun Roy, *not as a curious Indian Spectacle* but as a genuine co-worker in the wide-world field of religious and social reform. These scotch clergymen, firm and conscientious representatives and advocates of Protestant Christianity in its various clearly defined hues, appeared to think that if Babu Sen did not, as he could not, speak with an orthodox tongue, yet that there was nothing in his system which could be regarded as fundamentally antagonistic to their most cherished beliefs.

Baboo Sen, in being the successor of Rajah Rammohun Roy, is the present leader of the community of worshippers in India which was founded by that distinguished reformer, and which is popularly known as the Brahmo Somaj. Although the members of the Brahmo Somaj have not been able to accept the sectarian Christianity, they have not rejected Christianity as they find it in the Scriptures, and as represented in the life and death of Christ. While retaining and cherishing the one grand truth of their ancient system, they accept in their own way the religion of Christ, and endeavour

to combine the elements of both in one living faith. India, says Baboo Sen, felt called upon by the God of all nations not to accept the foreign civilization in its entirety and fulness, but to adopt truth and liberty, civilization and progress to her own national life and requirements." They will not import the civilization of any land to the exclusion or destruction of their own nationality. Whatever is true in any other religious system they willingly accept not however, as superseding anything of their own, but as an addition. "While freely receiving our share of benefits of modern Western civilization, we try they say "to uphold and preserve all that is good in the national books and life of the Hindoos, of our own countrymen." Baboo Sen declares—"The life and death of Christ—these two facts—simple, unmistakable, true—place these before the life of India, and the life of India well imbibe these two facts in a most mysterious manner. There is something grand there which India will accept." But he means, we suspect, that these facts must be presented untwisted and undeflected by passing through any sectarian medium. He seems to say "give us the New Testament and let us alone. We already believe in God and we shall take the liberty in believing Christ in the manner that best suits our heart and soul. Do not, for mercy's sake, shape and carve Him into a new idol and impose it upon us. We have done with idols. Don't bring us the shorter catechism, which may be all very well for the children in the mountains of Lebanon. We shall make our shorter catechism for ourselves, as you made



yours for yourselves. Willingly shall we accept your educational and religious helps but we must repel all further dogmatic bondage. It is enough for us, that we believe in God and His ever active providence." If that is at all a fair representation of the position occupied by the Brahmo Somaj community, it may be enough for them in the mean time. The position seems to be one from which great religious advancement is not only possible but certain. An earnest community, building on a basis of monotheism, may rise to any height under the highest. Having the idea of God as its centre, it is neither unchristian, nor ante-christian, and it has within it the power to become wholly Christian. As a religious community, the Brahmo Somaj has also a great social work to perform, they have not only to overturn polytheism, but also caste and all the personal disabilities by which the condition of women in India is made one of the most distressingly ignoble. In fact, Babu Sen and his followers are Reformers on a most Christian scale, and in a Christian spirit. They are carrying on a great work in India; they have already accomplished much and we feel convinced that their system, if vigorously and wisely and faithfully advanced and preached, is destined to revolutionise and purify the national life of the Hindus.

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A FAREWELL ADDRESS  
(EAST CENTRAL ASSOCIATION)

*To Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen*

Dear Friend and Brother,

It is with the homage of the heart's purest affection, and in a truly loving Christian spirit, we the president, vice-presidents, committee and members of the East Central Temperance Association for a second time, greet you in this spacious hall with a hearty welcome.

On the first occasion it was to extend to you, as an apostle of Temperance, the right hand of Christian fellowship, and welcome to this great metropolis composed as it is of upwards of three millions of human souls; and it is now, with a more perfect and practical knowledge of the purity of your life and deeds, that we have to tender you, on quitting these shores for India a hearty farewell.

We would, in thus affectionately taking leave of you, remember the many sacrifices you have made in leaving India for the public good; the many good works of labour and love in which you have been engaged since for the moral, social and religious elevation of the masses of your fellow-creatures. The goodly work of Temperance, as the most needed, would indeed appear to have been the paramount object of your mission to this country: Temperance being the hand-maid of a pure and unsullied Christianity. This you have carried out to a remarkable degree, which has gained for you the esteem of men of all

shades of opinion in the religious and moral world. You have indeed realised in the simplicity, purity and innocency of your life, and in your moral and religious teaching, the words of our English poet—

“ Slave to no sect, all party zeal above,  
Whose guide is reason, and whose God is Love.”

With feelings, then, of profound respect and true brotherhood, we address you with a grateful sense of your services, and for the earnestness and power you have thrown into the temperance movement, not only in aid of this society, but for others, and in great sincerity we pray for your peace, happiness and prosperity ; and hope even to have your prayers for our success as an association, and for that of the temperance world at large.

And may He, who is a tower of strength to those who trust in Him, evermore preserve you in His holy keeping ; and may we, one and all, continue to wage an unflinching and untiring war against drunkenness and the drink traffic. If so, the victory will and must be ours. We would hail you then, not only as the friend and benefactor of the Hindoo race but of the whole family of man : for you have hitherto exemplified in your unspotted life the axiom of a true living faith, “ the world is my country, and to do good is my religion ”

In testimony whereof, we have assembled here to-day, as a loving band, numbering among us some of the most energetic, sincere, and devoted temperance advocates and leading temperance reformers to be found in this country, to bid you God-speed, and farewell !

The portraits of many of these friends will be found in the album accompanying this address.

We fain would hope when you reach India that in glancing over these portraits of a few of England's temperance worthies, that you would occasionally spare a thought on many of those friends you have left behind, and it may soon prompt you to pay old England a second visit. May it then be that you will find all classes of the people, living under more favourable conditions—in an improved moral atmosphere, for with your keen observation and refined sense of feeling you must have been stricken with grief at witnessing so much of the drunkenness, moral pollution, mental degradation and misery which abound in the metropolis of this Empire; and that too arising from human agency, causes strictly within the power of man to control and remedy.

We would, therefore, one and all fervently pray—as “the means to an end;”

May the Lord influence Parliament to withdraw its support from the liquor traffic.

May God, merciful and infinite in his loving kindness, turn the heart of not only the British Parliament, but the British nation to a life of simplicity, purity, sobriety, and temperance.

And further may the Almighty in His tender mercy blot out the transgressions of this sinful people, and in His own good time and way, restore this highly-favoured nation, India, and the whole world, to a life of godliness and peace; and that one and all may soon

realise the fruition of the energetic theme of " Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and goodwill towards men ! "

We would further address you in the following earnest lines, from the pen of Miss Marianne Poore, a Christian lady, and pledged teetotaler of this society, and the authoress of several temperance poems :

### FAREWELL TO THE BABU KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

Glad words of welcome fell upon thine ear,  
When first we hailed thee to our shores :  
And myriad gentle voices, soft and clear,  
Sang forth thy praises o'er and o'er.

Illustrious guest ; for thee in stranger land,  
Love lives in every English breast ;  
Thou noble leader of the temperance band,  
May countless blessings on thee rest !

In God's might may'st thou onward joyful go,  
A soldier brave in camp and field ;  
Victory to gain in every blow,  
And bid at once each traitor yield.

True friends of temperance gather round thee now,  
Close knit in love and brotherhood ;  
United ever by one holy vow,  
By precept and example good

The farewell hour is come, 'tis God's decree,  
That best and dearest friends should part ;  
But widely severed doth by land and sea,  
Thy name shall live in each true heart.

Then friendship's off'ring thou wilt proudly take,  
To let it deck thine Indian home ;  
And prize it for the friends of temperance sake,  
Sweet visions of the past shall come  
Gaze on this album and each portrait there,  
Shall tell if faithless friends be found ;  
That those now left behind the grief will share,  
Of one we welcom'd on old England's ground.  
Many besides thee, now in manly prime,  
Quickly may draw their latest breath ;  
To meet thee far beyond the lapse of time,  
Where comes not parting change nor death.  
Oh, chief beloved ! thou art a traveller, too,  
And earthly thy tent ! a little while :  
The joys in Heav'n will burst upon thy vision,  
And thou shalt know thy Master's Smile.

May the blessings of the most High be with you  
May your journey to India be attended with safety !  
May you meet your dear wife, family and friends, in  
health and peace ; and we fervently pray the Almighty  
Father that you may continue to be the instrument in  
His hands of converting many more of your Hindoo  
brethren from idolatry, and in bringing them to the  
true knowledge of the Lord of Life and Glory.

JOHN ROBERT TAYLOR, *Chairman,*  
GEORGE KING, *Honorary Secretary.*

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## DR. PUSEY AND KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

Professor F. Max Muller who was present at an  
interview which Keshub Chunder Sen had with the

late Dr. Pusey at Oxford, describes the meeting in his 'Biographical Essays' :—

"While at Oxford, I took him to see Dr. Pusey and I regret that I did not write down at the time the deeply interesting conversation that passed between the two. I saw a short account of that meeting in the 'Liberal' of June 1, 1884 : Mr. Sen paid flying visits to Oxford and Cambridge. At the latter place he saw his old friend, Mr. Cowell, and had also a friendly interview with Mr. F. Maurice, whose broad and tolerant views so well agreed with those of his Eastern friend. To Oxford he went accompanied by Professor Max Muller. The most remarkable incident of this visit was his interview with Dr. Pusey. Mr. Sen and Professor Max Muller were shown into a small room upon the tables and floors of which were scattered heaps of books and papers in delightful confusion, in the midst of them all being seated the venerable figure that had stood many storms, led many controversies, and gained many trophies. A serious talk ensued, in the course of which Professor Max Muller asked if a man in the position of Mr. Sen should receive salvation. Dr. Pusey answered with a smile, 'Yes, I think he will.' This was no small compliment and concession from the man who had no word to say in favor of Dr. Colenso."

"I need hardly say that the question was not asked quite so abruptly. Dr. Pusey was at first reserved till the conversation turned on prayer. Keshub Chunder Sen, while defending his own position towards Christianity, burst out into an eloquent panegyric on prayer,

which ended with the words, 'I am always praying.' This touched Pusey's heart, and he said, 'Then you cannot be far wrong.' I hesitate now to write down from memory what followed afterwards. I only know that I never heard Pusey speak with so much of truly poetical eloquence. There was an image of an evening in a village churchyard which he drew with a few graphic words, and which has remained in my memory ever since, though I should not venture to copy it here. It was meant to illustrate the affection of the people for their Church, around which they buried what was dearest to them in this life. My rather abrupt-sounding question was addressed to Dr. Pusey, after he had been expatiating on what seemed to him necessary for salvation, in answer to Keshub Chunder Sen, who had maintained that on all that was essential in Christ's teaching he was at one with the best of English divines. Dr. Pusey's remarks seemed to me to describe a form of Christianity which neither Keshub Chunder Sen nor India at large could ever accept, nay, which I thought St. Paul himself would not have accepted, and I therefore ventured to interpose the question whether, at the time of Christ a man who believed what Keshub Chunder Sen believed would or would not have been received as a disciple."

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## COUNT GOBLET D'ALVILLA ON KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

*(The well known writer who came to India with  
His Majesty Edward the VII in 1875)*

" Keshub is one of those men who, according to circumstances, can become a Buddha, a Mahomed, or a Luther. It suffices to have seen him or even to have known his works to understand the ascendancy which he exercises upon the masses. More than once have I severely judged his actions and almost despaired of his future. But each time that I have made myself acquainted with his discourses and writings, I have felt myself in some manner seized by a charm disengaged from his personality and talents.

If the ceremonies of Keshub, instead of being borrowed from one religion, are borrowed indifferently from all, have we any reason to reproach him for that which is in substance, a guarantee and acknowledgment of toleration ? The fusion of all religions into one synthetic religion has been in all ages the dream of many a large and illumined spirit in advance of the times. Aristotle, Cleanthus, Seneca, Maximus of Tyre, Confucius, Kabir, the Sufis of Persia as also the German idealists, and contemporary hierologues, have shewn the identity of the religious sentiment under a multiplicity of manifestations. Some thinkers such as Proclus, Jamblicus, Alexander Severu, in the antiquity, Akbar in India in the middle ages, and up to a certain point, August Comte in our century have even tried to

found a universal religion, not in eliminating the different—elements of the principal religions in the fashion of English theism and American transcendentalism, but in juxta-positing their rites and symbols or the names and forms under which those religions conceive the supreme object of worship.

Such is equally the work undertaken by Keshub and *if there is a difference it is this, that the author of the New Dispensation has succeeded in founding a religion there where his predecessors have not been able to get their syncretism out of the domain of individual phantasy.* Alone perhaps, did the Roman polytheism finish by becoming an amalgam of that species; but it remained a juxtaposition rather than a synthesis of divers practical religions. It was reserved for the New Dispensation to offer us a living church founded all of a piece with materials borrowed from religions the most different from each other, and that is a fact which contributes not the less to render its development so curious to the students of religious history."

—*Contemporary Religious Evolution.*

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DR. W. W. HUNTER ON KESHUB  
CHUNDER SEN

I

\*\*\*\*\* " As a result of the spread of education also, many religious movements have been going on since 1830 among the Hindus. A sect named the Adi-Brahmo, adopts a theism based on the Veda, and simple

morality, without the superstructure of Brahminical Hinduism. It includes among its members many persons of high character and social position. Another sect the Brahmos, often styled the Progressive Brahmos, profess a purer theism and a high standard of morality. They reject the claims of the Veda to divine inspiration, and have to some extent thrown off the more objectionable restrictions of caste. Babu Keshub Chunder Sen was their last known recent leader. The death of that *truly great man* occurred while these sheets were passing through the press (1834), and has left a blank in the Indian religious world. Some of his more zealous followers already disclose an inclination to accord divine honours to their beloved teacher and friend. The number of educated natives who hold Brahmo opinion is considerable."

—*Imperial Gazetteer of India.*

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## II

" Dr. W. W. Hunter takes a real interest in the Brahmo Somaj. He favoured Rev. P. C. Mozoomder at Simla in 1886 with a long talk about the position of Keshub Chunder Sen in that Church, and concluded by saying " that sooner the Hindu theists of the Brahmo Somaj learned to recognise Keshub Chunder Sen as their *holiest saint and the model for their lives*, the better for themselves and the future of their movement. The prospects of the Brahmo Somaj, without the personality of Keshub Chunder Sen, were as gloomy and

unpromising as those of the rationalistic agitations in England and America."

—*Interpreter, November 1886.*

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A LETTER FROM REV. C. H. HASSAL OF  
MANCHESTER TO MINISTER KESHUB (1883)

Servant of God—Greetings. From the first time your name and mission became known to me, my soul rejoiced and I gave thanks to God that it had pleased Him to write all truths, and thus produce peace on earth and good will among men. I hail thee and the new era with joy and gladness. Thy star risen in the East shines even unto the West, and shall continue to shine until rays encircle this planet with a belt of glory. Even so. Amen. I have like thyself sought among the faiths of men a bond of union, and in so doing felt blest. I stretch out my hands and plead with you to come and help us, give us instruction and *make me one with you*. Write unto us and inform us of those if any in this nation of the New Faith, that we may commune with them. Show unto us fully the perfect way that we may walk therein. Kindly tell unto us what are your organs and how obtainable in this country. If any of your missionaries are here, tell me of them, that I may seek them out. I have so much to say that I know not how to convey it to you.

I pray that God will show you the state of my mind and my desires. Amen.

I remain, praying for your success,  
C. H. HASSAL,

## ESTIMATION OF KESHUB DURING HIS STAY IN ENGLAND, 1870

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KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

Most of our readers have now had the opportunity of seeing and hearing our distinguished visitor from India ; and the deep impression which he produced upon us in London is, as we write, being extended throughout the provinces. We rejoice at the reception which appears to have awaited him in the various places he has visited ; and the reports of the addresses he has delivered, so far as they have reached us, are marked by the same spiritual power and earnestness as those which have been published in our own columns, and which we have reason to believe have been very widely and eagerly read. We should not do justice to our own feelings if we did not endeavour briefly to gather up and put on record a few of the thoughts awakened by the remarkable man who is in our midst, and who has in so unmistakable a manner, by the simplicity of his character, and his felt devotion to truth and goodness, touched and influenced many hearts.

England has been brought—we may say for the first time—by KESHUB CHUNDER SEN into living contact with India. That great country is no longer a myth or a remote abstraction to us. For the first time we have seen with our eyes and heard with our ears one of her distinguished children addressing us in our own tongue—one who is a representative of her religion and

her civilisation—and the gulf that has hitherto separated us has been bridged over. In Mr. Sen we recognise a man of race, and colour, and nationality that are not English; and yet in his presence these accidental circumstances are forgotten in the affectionate sentiment of brotherhood which he awakens. For the first time we fully realise the great fact that the vast millions of India are portions of our common humanity, and are now pleading with us most persuasively for the recognition of duties which hitherto we have but feebly admitted. Whatever may, in times past, have been England's bearing to her Empire in the East—whatever the faults that may have been committed—the geographical distance that has separated us, and the popular ignorance on all Indian questions, must go far to excuse many national sins. \* \* \* \*

He (Mr. Sen) is the voice of his country reminding us of our national obligations, and opening up a new and boundless field for the exercise and the extension of whatever is best and noblest in our national life. We can at least give to India our fervent sympathy and prayers; we can take a practical interest in her progress; and seize every opportunity to hold out the hand of help in the way deemed most effective by India herself.

In other respects, perhaps less contemplated by him, we are specially indebted to Mr. SEN. His appearance amongst us, viewed religiously, has truly been a phenomenon. Our Christianity, as he no doubt has long felt, has become strangely exclusive and contentious. We

Christians like the Jews of old, have been the peculiar people ; specially favoured ; heirs of the promises ; alone possessed of a Divine revelation ; redeemed and sanctified by One who has died for us. So privileged and blessed we have looked with pity or horror on those outside the Christian pale as in some way forsaken by GOD, and not the objects of his merciful love ! As a further consequence of such exclusiveness, our English Christianity has been identified in its usual ministrations with ecclesiastical traditions, Orders, Forms, Sacraments, Fastings, and the like. In a community pervaded in every part by this ecclesiastical Christianity, one presents himself the heir of an ancient faith, disowning the Christian name and its entire organisation and history ! He is a Brahmo, a Theist ; unordained, unbaptised ; a heretic of heretics ; and yet he claims to be a brother, and presumes to speak to us of God, of Christ, and of duty ! How are we to regard him ? Shall we stone him as a pestilent fellow and an innovator—one who is diabolically undermining our Christian faith ? Doubtless the attitude of some worthy Christians towards him is suspicious enough, and far from fraternal ; nor can it be wondered at, considering the narrow and exclusive ideas in which they have lived. But the great majority who have come in contact with the living and loving charm of his goodness have been ready to recognise it. We thank Mr. Sen for giving us a new reading of our Christianity—for reminding us that Christ is Asiatic rather more than European, and that we of the West have no monopoly in his Gospel. We

admit the Oriental type of mind and thought in the Bible, and feel the special affinities that may exist between the Hebrew Prophets and Saints and the attitude of our Indian friend. At any rate, we perceive, in his fulness of the religious life, that God is indeed no respecter of persons ; that His Spirit breathes in Brahmo as in Christian ; and that, verily, he who feareth God and worketh righteousness is of no peculiar country or name. Nominally we have long assented to the principle, but now we know it as a reality. It is one special lesson inculcated by Mr. Sen. In some form we meet it in all his addresses, and it is proclaimed in every fact of his life, that we have one Father in Heavens that truth is not monopolised by any nation or sect ; and that without serving each other as brethren in the spirit of fellowship and kindness no man can be regenerated. " Often have I rejoicingly united my voice with theirs (the English)," he writes in his epistle to his Indian friends, " in the worship of our dear Lord, the common Father of England and India. In spite of the differences of race and nationality, we have all stood around His holy altar, and as one united family rendered homage to Him. May such spiritual fellowships extend on all sides and embrace all the nations of the earth." Surely we have here a practical illustration of our old Christianity that reads like a new revelation.

Hear, again, how this Indian Theist, this heretic Apostle, has been preaching his Gospel in England :—

" I have spoken of the sweetness and all-conquering power of God's mercy, of man's unworthiness, and the



need of prayer and humility. I have protested against worldliness and weak faith, against the heartless worship of an abstract and absent Deity, and against impurity of character concealed under the cloak of theological conformity. I have pointed out the difference between the spirit of Christ and the dogmas of Christianity ; between saying unto him, "Lord, Lord," and doing the Father's will ; between the profession of Christianity and the inward growth of Christ in the individual soul, and the assimilation of his blood and flesh to man's spiritual being. I have said that to be a Christian means only to be Christ like, and that salvation, redemption, atonement and regeneration mean nothing more than the sanctification of man's will with God's will. As a member of a universal Theistic Church I have protested against all manner of sectarian antipathy and unbrotherliness, and advocated the unification of all Churches and sects in the love of the One True God."

And how has this preaching of the Indian Brahmo been received? Thousands have welcomed it with enthusiasm ; thousands have accepted it as the word they were longing to hear. \* \* \* \* \* The Gospel of the grace of GOD has been turned into an instrument of animosity and division, instead of becoming a bond of brotherhood and an incentive to redeeming and unwearied love towards the degraded and unfortunate. When to be a Christian means only to be Christ-like, and when we shall have learned that inward sanctification is more than all outward forms or dogmas about salvation, the Kingdom of God shall be nearer than it

now is. We are devoutly grateful to Mr. Sen for the lesson he has taught us. He has, with a gentleness that wins whilst it rebukes, exposed the mischief and the misery of our sectarian antipathies and the utter worthlessness of so much of our metaphysical and cumbersome theology. We trust our preachers of all denominations will take a hint from recent experiences and instead of weariedly detailing from their pulpits mysterious and profitless abstractions, will try to touch and warm our hearts with religion. Whatever pulpit Mr. Sen has occupied he has imparted to it a kind of consecration. Crowds have gathered round him, and seats long empty have been eagerly filled. We were privileged to hear most of his addresses in London, and can aver that only subjects of religious edification, culture and brotherhood—the primal lessons of the Gospel—engaged him. The love of God, the necessity of prayer, the importance of faith, the danger of worldliness and the beauty of holiness were the lessons he taught. In setting forth his thoughts he has only one aim—the religious awakening of his audience. No airs of rhetoric, no display of learning, no philosophical speculation, no dogmatic narrowness or denunciation mar his glorious work. With a calmness that is almost tame and monotonous, he speaks to the heart, and touches those deeper chords of sympathy and goodness that are universal amongst men. This is the secret of his power. These are the outward characteristics of his preaching, but behind these is the nameless charm of a noble character, the winning

sweetness of natural piety ; the intellect and the vision of a great and a true man.

Such, in very poor outline, is our impression of Keshub Chunder Sen and the work he is doing amongst us. We regard him as a great Reformer, raised up by Providence to be a blessing to the world, to restore to us a purer Christianity, and to proclaim anew the grand and glorious truths now obscured amid antiquated traditions and the inventions of priests—the *Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of men*. We trust and pray that his visit to England will be a new landmark in our religious history, and the beginning of unbounded good to India. May the word that has been preached to us bear abundant fruit, and awaken everywhere new hopes, new responsibilities, and a fresh consecration in the spirit of Christ !

—*The Inquirer*.

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### CHUNDER SEN.\*

We have long been familiar with the British people going forth as the pioneers of civilisation and religion to plead with heathen nations to turn from superstition and idol worship, but it is a new thing to find a native Hindoo visiting our shores and raising up a solemn protest against our "Christian Government" degrading and desolating his countrymen by the traffic in opium and alcohol. The rebuke tendered by the illustrious Hindoo was both merited and becoming, and his appeal

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\* They used to call Keshub Chunder Sen—"Chunder Sen."

to the people of this country to take "hands off" is alike touching and instructive. It may be that our profession of religion is more orthodox than this representative of Hindooism, but we are bound in honesty to admit—although to the discredit of our nation—that his practical teachings upon this subject are more in harmony with the precepts and principles of the New Testament. It is simply monstrous to suppose that the professed religion of this country can ever commend itself to any people, civilised or savage, while our Government continues to fatten upon the proceeds of a traffic in the bodies and souls of those whom it has plundered and deceived. It is impious mockery upon the part of any Church to ask the heathen to accept the Gospel at the hands of its missionaries and ministers while its voice is silent as the grave in view of such national crimes, and the accumulation of whose revenues must, in the light of Scripture, be regarded as "the price of blood." How stinging is the rebuke administered to Great Britain, and more especially to her churches, in the following sentences from the lips of this missionary from heathenism on his visit to Christian Scotland;—"Give us all that is good and grand in your religion and in your society, but have you done so? Have you not given us many evils of which you even should be ashamed? What is the effect of that iniquitous liquor traffic in India? Does it not tend to demoralise the people? I have seen with my own eyes the awful effects of intemperance and drunkenness amongst my people. With the progress of education and enlightenment you

may measure side by side the progress of intemperance and intoxication. While, therefore, I joyfully hail the progress of English education throughout India, I feel grieved when I see how our young countrymen, boasting of their English education, take advantage of the liberty which education accords to them, going forward madly and recklessly in a career of moral infatuation and iniquity, and which, alas, in many cases, only ends in untimely death. Rise as one man to protest against the liquor traffic. India does not require it. The drinking custom does not belong to India, and you should not force this upon my people."

We hope, for the sake of ourselves, as well as for salvation of the heathen, that the lessons pressed upon the nation by the illustrious Hindoo with regard to caste, the opium trade, and liquor traffic, will not be lost, but that they will be accepted in the spirit in which they have been tendered.

—*The [Edinburgh] Reformer.*

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REV. R. W. DALE'S LETTER RESPECTING  
KESHUB CHUNDER SEN, THE INDIAN REFORMER

"I had the opportunity of having two or three hours' conversation with Mr. Sen, and was greatly attracted by him. He said that, having studied Western literature and science in one of the Government colleges, Hindooism became incredible to him, and for a time he lost all faith in the supernatural and the Divine. When I asked him how he explained the origin of his faith in one God, he

replied that he could not explain it except by ascribing it to God Himself. 'Do you mean,' I said, 'that God Himself put his hand on you, and by a direct and supernatural influence on your soul brought you to Himself?' He answered: 'That is exactly what I mean.' And the impression he left upon my mind was that he had been really taught of the Holy Ghost. There is a wonderful gentleness and devoutness about him, and, if he only declared himself a Christian, no Christian man would hesitate to believe that he had received the gift of the Spirit. Whether he is likely to be led to the true knowledge of Christ is a question which I know not how to answer; but it will be wonderful to me if he is not."

—*The [Chicago] Advance.*

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## MR. SEN'S VISIT TO NOTTINGHAM:

### CORRESPONDENCE

*To the Editor of the Nottingham Journal.*

Sir,—As proprietor of a sentence which has unfortunately shocked you, I trust you will allow me a word in reply to your strictures. In expressing the aspiration that we might be led to as high a Christianity as that of our distinguished visitor, I had in my mind, on the one hand, the passionate devotion of Chunder Sen to the words and person of Jesus Christ, the manifest working of the Spirit of God within him, and his enthusiastic love for humanity of every caste and race; and I had in my mind, on the other hand, the lip-service to Christ

too common amongst Trinitarians and Unitarians alike the poverty of divine grace within our souls, and the jealousies which embitter our intercourse with one another. I am well aware that Mr. Sen disclaims the title of "Christian"; but when I see where that title is allowed and where it is refused, I cannot help thinking that in the eye of Heaven, it is of less importance what we are called than what we are.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

Nottingham,  
June 22nd, 1870.

RICHARD A. ARMSTRONG.

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*To the Editor of the Nottingham Journal.*

Sir,—Will you allow me, as one of the Nonconformist ministers of the town, to express through your columns, my most sincere regret in having been prevented from joining my brethren on the Mechanics' platform, on Tuesday evening, in the hearty welcome given to Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen. With that welcome my whole heart went. A prior and urgent engagement obliged me, however, to go out of town, and I only returned in time to hear a part of the proceedings.

I had hoped the Mayor would be good enough to express to the meeting my deep regret in being absent, lest my absence should be construed into any hesitation and want of sympathy.

Yours obediently,

CHARLES S. SLATER.

16, Mapperley Road,  
June 22nd.

## LESSONS FROM A LECTURE

Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen is sharing the fate of all our lions. His departure to India, ere the Indian apostle is tamed down to commonplace, and his voice is cheap and familiar, is not to be entirely regretted. His lecture last night closely resembled in form the letters which Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World" writes to China—with a difference in substance, it is true. Let all of us turn to Chunder Sen's lecture ; it is a mirror in which we may hope to see ourselves reflected without flattery. What a picture ! What an abandoned people we are ! English gentlemen, he says, you eat too many things at dinner. Girls of the period, with your hideous heads and tails, do not make your appearance in India. You have castes quite as strongly marked out as ours. Your country is full of pauperism ; your journals full of cases of breach of promise, and baby farming ; and all these things are a disgrace to your country. With what delight must one quit the banks of the Thames, where man is fierce and woman labours to make herself hideous, and betake himself again to the banks of the Ganges, where man is mild, the lives of babies are respected, and chignons unknown ! —*The Echo.*

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## SRI KESHUB'S ECLECTICISM

[By LATE REV. LALA KASHI RAM of *Navavidhan*]  
*Navavidhan* (November 22, 1928) ]

I need not mention here the various estimates formed of the greatness of Keshub's personality and of his



Message after his death by eminent thinkers belonging to different religious communities both in India and foreign lands. One testimony, I believe, will be quite sufficient to give you an idea of the position which he had come to occupy in the religious world and the far-reaching influence of his teachings, even while he was still with us. I will quote the verdict of a thoroughly impartial Christian, the late Mr. Robert Knight of the old *Statesman and Friend of India*. In a very thoughtful article commenting upon one of the lectures delivered by Brahmananda Keshub Chunder at the Town Hall of Calcutta, Mr. Knight spoke of him and his message in the following words:—"When Keshub speaks, the world listens; and listen full well it may, for after bearing his lecture on Saturday last we have less hesitation than ever in according him a place among the world's great religious geniuses and teachers. No matter how small may be the number of his professed adherents (and they are probably very much more numerous than were the followers of Christ during his life time) his voice and his teachings are not limited to them, but go abroad to the ears of all the Somajes, of all his educated countrymen, of all religious thinkers wherever English language prevails.

And what did Keshub speak to which the world listened full well? What was the sum and substance of those marvellous annual orations delivered in the chief centre of enlightenment in India, which attracted the acknowledged leaders and representatives of different communities, the very cream of educated classes, both

Indian and European, from the very highest in the land, not excepting the Viceroys of the Indian Empire? What was the charm in his speech for which they waited all the year round, and to which they gave a patient hearing with all absorbing interest, and which, in due course, reached the ears of thoughtful men in every quarter of the globe where English tongue is understood?

It was no ordinary word. Verily, it ~~was~~ was a divine speech, the loftiest expression, in the modern times, of undying spirit of all ancient revelations, reborn, with all their combined forces, as one harmonious whole—the spirit of a New Dispensation not confined to any particular individual or sect, but working with tremendous power in Sri Keshub himself in his small community of Brahmos, and in all the boldest and the most liberal-minded of every Church, in order to crush the evil of sectarianism itself, and thus to unite all mankind in one loving brotherhood, with God as their common Father. It was the last, though not the final proclamation, in words of fire, of a serious call from Heaven, to all the nations of the earth, to give up their racial hatred, their religious pride, prejudice, and to help in building up the spirit of true charity and toleration, a Church Universal on the basis of the unity of God and His many-sided Truth underlying all that is best in the diverse phases and features of the religious life and thought of the world.

No wonder, the very sublimity of an Ideal so high, struck the world dumb. Keshub never expected that

the millenium would come in a day. He wanted men of different religious persuasions, as a preliminary step, to come out of their narrow sects and breathe the freer and fresher atmosphere of a larger spiritual fellowship. But, unfortunately, the friction caused by their drawing close to one another produced the fire of fanaticism, leaving little room for the entertainment of an eclectic idea and much less for its practice. All sectarians and narrow-minded bigots, standing on a high pedestal as sole monopolists of the whole truth of God, looked upon the New Message as something beneath contempt. The ordinary man, who lived for the world alone, without any aspiration for a higher life, heard it with one ear and drove it out from the other, having no time, in the midst of all-engrossing worldly affairs, to spare for the consideration of so serious a matter. The pessimist and the unbelieving sceptic or cynic, with their shortsightedness or want of spiritual insight, pronounced their judgment against it at the very first hearing or without giving any hearing at all. To them the very thought of anything like the brotherhood of all prophets and the harmony of all scriptures, in the face of the world's endless sectarian strifes and discords, was a day dream, an idea utterly impracticable, or at any rate beyond their comprehension. The irreverent mob scoffed at it. And every fool, in the pride of his folly, laughed at it. Many looked upon it as an insignificant offshoot of some old school of eclectic philosophy or theology, owing to the initial mistake they made in confounding Keshub's eclecticism, pre-eminently religious, with the pedantry

of mere learning. And not a few even in the Brahmo Somaj misjudged and misinterpreted it, through pre-conceived bias if not insidious malice.\*

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### KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

*Navavidhan (6th and 13th January 1927)*

It is significant that forty-one years after the death of Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen, the Mayor and Sheriff of Calcutta should jointly summon a citizens' meeting to observe his death anniversary which happens to fall to-day (Saturday). Keshub Chunder Sen was one of the greatest apostles of liberty, and a pioneer of the national movement for the rights of self-determination. He was a great orator and a great religious and social reformer. One need not perhaps have come under the spell of his personal magnetism to form a correct estimate of Keshub's greatness and to properly appreciate his contribution to Indian Nationalism. A close study of Keshub's speeches and writings is, perhaps, enough to give one a glimpse into the secret of his greatness and his wonderful personality which secured for him the esteem and admiration of Indians and Europeans alike. When the news of Keshub's death reached England, Professor Max Muller wrote: "India has lost her greatest son." The secret of Keshub's greatness lay in his faith in God and Man. It is,

\*An unpublished article received from his grandson Mr. Jyoti Kumar and is said to have been written on the 19th November 1917.

perhaps, more in his "faith like that of Christ in the infinitude of man" than in his living faith in God that the key of Keshub's greatness has to be found. What Keshub said of Christ in his lecture, *Asia's Message to Europe*, may be as well said of himself: "If Christ is one with Divinity, he is also one with Humanity. If you believe in the full Christ, in the perfect Christ, you must believe in the double harmony of his nature, harmony with God or communion and harmony with God and man made Keshub what he was. His faith was more in Christ's incarnation of Brotherhood than of Fatherhood. Keshub realised that the growing miseries in the world brought about by Europe's lust for gold and power can only be checked, if Europe professedly Christian, had real and living faith in Christ and his message to humanity. He had clearly foreseen that the best antidote against European imperialism was to inculcate in their minds a reverence for Christ and his teachings. He realised that if the doctrine of atheism was dangerous for humanity no less dangerous was bigotry which teaches to look upon the followers of all other religions as heathens and Kaffers. In fact this religious bigotry has proved more prolific of mischief and bloodshed in the world than even lust for gold and territory. He was a prophet of harmony. "Truth is one, and recognises neither caste nor colour," proclaimed Keshub Chunder. He sought to harmonise all that was true and good and pure in every religion. That was the essence of his New Dispensation. "Whatsoever is Christian and pure and holy my Church rejoicingly

glorifies. The non-Christian Asiatic has his meekness, but I ask, is not that meekness Christian? The Hindu is forgiving, is not that forgiveness Christian? If the Muhammadan speaks truth, is not his truth Christian? If the Buddhist is charitable. . . . is not his charity Christian?" This synthesis of all that is good and pure, constitutes the cardinal doctrine of Keshub's faith. He preached it and practised it himself.

This synthetic doctrine of Keshub was also peculiarly Indian. It is the Hindu who was the first to recognise unity in diversity. "He is one, though called by many names." This conception of oneness of God is at the root of the Hindu spirit of toleration. The Christian doctrine of Brotherhood of Man is ingrained in his heart. Indian Nationalism differs from the conception of Nationalism held by other peoples in that it is not based on hatred of other nations or on a spirit of exclusiveness. Speaking nearly half a century ago Keshub Chunder Sen raised his voice of solemn warning against the imperialism of Europe and its annihilating propensities. "*Heaven abhors monopoly, and vouchsafes unto each individual nation freedom of action and diversities of operation, so that each may grow with all the freshness and variety of natural growth.*" Indian Nationalism seeks to-day to fulfil this ideal of Keshub Chunder Sen. He was a prophet of true Nationalism. By paying their grateful homage to the sacred memory of Keshub Chunder Sen our people only repay their debt of gratitude to this great apostle of Liberty, Humanity and Fraternity.

—*The Forward*, January 8, 1927.

## Chapter II

### THE CONTRIBUTION OF KESHUB TO MODERN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT\*

REV. G. HOWELLS, M.A., B.LITT., B.D., PH.D.

I am glad to be here to-day to have the opportunity of contributing my humble token of regard and reverence for the memory of the great Brahmo reformer, Keshub Chunder Sen, a man who, in my judgment, will take his place as one of the commanding figures in the religious history of the 19th century. Much has been said and written regarding Keshub's influence on Hinduism, and his indebtedness to Christianity. The few minutes I have at my disposal this evening I would devote to what I consider to be the influence of Keshub on Modern Christian Thought and Life, for it needs to be remembered that his work and teaching excited deep interest and aroused earnest thought not only in Christian missionary circles in India, but in Christian circles throughout the West, especially Great Britain and America.

#### I

In my judgment he has *helped us, Western Christians, to give due recognition to the Oriental aspect*

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\* Reprint of a series of articles which appeared in "The World and The New Dispensation," January 1919. They were based on the Address delivered by Dr. Howells at the Calcutta University Institute Hall on the 8th of January Keshub Memorial Meeting, presided over by H. E. Lord Ronaldshay.

*of Christ's character.* As the result of many centuries of Christian life and theological speculation our views of Christ had taken on an unduly Western aspect. We had come to think of him in the light of an ordinary European, and had grown accustomed to assign to him characteristics that are essentially Western rather than Eastern, or universal. It cannot, therefore, be surprising that India regarded the religion brought to them by the missionary as something essentially European and foreign. The Indian learned to look upon Christianity much in the light that he regarded any other foreign introduction whether it be habits and customs or the manifold products of commerce. Keshub rendered invaluable service to modern Christian thought in bringing home to us the fact that Jesus Christ was not an Englishman from London or an American from New York, but an Oriental of Palestine with a world-wide outlook and appeal. For instance, in his famous lecture, "*Jesus Christ, Europe and Asia*," delivered in 1866, Keshub thus sets forth the Oriental Christ as the great bond of brotherly union between East and West:—

"I rejoice, yea, I am proud, that I am an Asiatic. And was not Jesus Christ an Asiatic? Yes, and his disciples were Asiatics, and all the agencies primarily employed for the propagation of the Gospel were Asiatic. In fact Christianity was founded and developed by Asiatics, and in Asia. When I reflect on this, my love for Jesus becomes a hundredfold intensified; I feel him nearer my heart, and deeper in my national sympathies. Why should I then feel ashamed to acknowledge that nationality which he acknowledged? Shall I not rather say he is most congenial and akin to my oriental nature, more agreeable to my oriental habits of thought



and feeling ? And is it not true that an Asiatic can read the imageries and allegories of the Gospel, and its descriptions of natural sceneries, of customs and manners, with greater interest, and a fuller perception of their force and beauty than Europeans ? In Christ we see not only the exaltedness of humanity, but also the grandeur of which Asiatic nature is susceptible. To us Asiatics, therefore, Christ is doubly interesting, and his religion is entitled to our peculiar regard as an altogether oriental affair. The more this great fact is pondered, the less, I hope, will be the antipathy and hatred of European Christians against oriental nationalities, and the greater the interest of Asiatics in the teachings of Christ. And thus in Christ, Europe and Asia, the East and the West, may learn to find harmony and unity."

And again in his Town Hall utterance he says in 1879 :—

" For England has sent unto us, after all, a Western Christ. This is indeed to be regretted. Our countrymen find that in this Christ, sent by England, there is something that is not quite congenial to the native mind, not quite acceptable to the genius of the nation. It seems that the Christ that has come to us is an Englishman, with English manners and customs about him, and with the temper and spirit of an Englishman in him. Hence is it that the Hindu people shrink back and say : Who is this revolutionary reformer who is trying to sap the very foundations of native society, and establish here an outlandish faith and civilization quite incompatible with oriental instincts and ideas ?..... But why should you Hindus go to England to learn Jesus Christ ? Is not his native land nearer to India than England ?..... Recall to your minds, gentlemen, the true Asiatic Christ, divested of all Western appendages carrying on the work of redemption among his own people. Behold he cometh to us in loose flowing garment, his dress and features altogether oriental, a perfect Asiatic in everything. Watch his movements, and you will find genuine orientalism in all his habits and manners,—in his uprising and down-sitting, his going forth and his coming in, his preaching and ministry, his ver

language and style and tone. Indeed, while reading the Gospel, we cannot but feel that we are quite at home when we are with Jesus, and that he is altogether one of us. Surely Jesus is OUR Jesus."—[INDIA ASKS WHO IS CHRIST ?]

Words such as these have undoubtedly had a deep influence on modern Christian thought. They have given us a larger Christ, and helped to create a bond of sympathy with our Indian and Eastern brethren.

## II

Keshub has *helped us to recognize more clearly the paramount significance of the human element in Jesus Christ*. The tendency of Western thought for centuries had been to remove Christ far away from human life, and to think of him too exclusively as the Divine son rather than also the Son of Man. We have become in relation to Jesus himself as in relation to God unduly deistic in our outlook. There was in our thinking an unreality about the character of Christ that made the true imitation of him by men something beyond human attainment. The Christ of theological speculation was not the Jesus of the Gospels, and our Christianity suffered to an incalculable degree in thus removing Jesus from the realities of our human life and conceiving him as simply, if not exclusively, superhuman. In this connection I may quote the following words of Keshub :—

" If Christ is the Son of God, the Son of our Holy Father, he is unto us all a Brother, the sweetest, purest, the brightest of our brothers. Is he an incarnation ? He is an incarnation of Brotherhood, not Fatherhood. He is our holy Brother in flesh. The blessed Gospel that gladdened Bethlehem eighteen centuries ago was that unto us a Brother was born. The spirit that came down

from heaven and took a human form was the spirit of our Divine Brother. If you accept Christ as the Son of God, you are bound to carry the doctrine to its legitimate logical conclusion. You must boldly proclaim him your Brother, Christian brethren, shudder not, falter not, be not ashamed of Brother Christ. It is the glory of Christianity that it is not only the religion of Divinity, but also and pre-eminently the religion of Humanity. It gives us the Father and the Brother both."—[THE MARVELLOUS MYSTERY—THE TRINITY—1882.]

And again, in his last lecture "*Asia's Message to Europe*," 1883, Keshub says :—

"Analyze Christ's fundamental theology, and you will find in it two parts essentially distinct from each other. The first is, "I in my Father" ; the second, "Ye in me." All Europe believes in the first, but the second has yet to be realized. Who is there in orthodox Christendom that does not say, Ay, when Christ says, I and my Father are one ? Surely in the identity of his nature with that of the Supreme God all Christian nations in the West have established their firm faith. But they have only accepted one half of Christ. Why should they abjure the other half ? If Christ is one with Divinity, he is also one with Humanity. If you believe in the full Christ, in the perfect Christ, you must believe in the double harmony of his nature, harmony with God or communion, and harmony with man or community. Alas ! Christian Europe does not yet comprehend the real secret of the words,—Ye in me. Christ's identity with all mankind is indeed a grand mystery, which Christian Europe seems yet unable to understand. I do believe as you do that the Son and the Father are one, but this unity is only the first half of Christ. Why do you cast off the other half of Christ, his unity with humanity ? Take this second half, take the entire Christ."

Words such as these were altogether necessary for modern Christians. In our fears for the divinity of Jesus and his claims to identity with the Father we

have not done justice to the humanity of Jesus and his claims to identity with his brother men. As in another place Keshub points out, Christ went to his Father and prayed :—"As Thou Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." Until recent years the modern Christian has shrunk from the significance of this aspect of the teaching of Jesus. It is still far from fully recognized by modern Christianity, and our spiritual life is all the poorer in consequence. When we attain to the fulness of such teaching and all that it involves we shall recognize more clearly the debt we owe to the teaching of Keshub and to men of similar outlook of faith.

### III

Keshub has *helped us to give a more human interpretation to the doctrine of the Trinity*. Western Christianity had come to regard the Trinity almost entirely in the light of a metaphysical abstraction or a theological dogma. In the early centuries of the Christian era a sharp controversy arose in the Christian Church between the followers of Arius and Athanasius, on this great subject. The controversy centred round points of a metaphysical character and Christian Bishops in numberless synods cursed one another turn by turn. Riots and armed conflicts became the order of the day. The bearing of the doctrine on the realities of the spiritual life were almost wholly ignored, and throughout the Christian centuries the doctrines of the Trinity had an air of unreality about it to the average Christian mind. To-day, we are beginning to think of the doctrine

of Trinity more in terms of the spiritual life. The following words of Keshub illustrate what I mean :

“ Here you have the complete triangular figure of the Trinity, three profound truths—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—making up the harmonious whole of the economy of creation. Gentlemen, look at this clear triangular figure with the eye of faith, and study its deep mathematics. The apex is the very God Jehovah, the Supreme Brahma of the Vedas. Alone, in His own eternal glory, He dwells. From Him comes down the Son, in a direct line, an emanation from Divinity. Thus God descends and touches one end of the base of Humanity, then, running all along the base permeates the world, and then by the power of the Holy Ghost drags up degenerated humanity to Himself. Divinity coming down to Humanity is the Son ; Divinity carrying up Humanity to heaven is the Holy Ghost. This is the whole philosophy of salvation. Such is the short story of human redemption. How beautiful, how soul-satisfying ! The Father continually manifests His wisdom and mercy in creation, till they take the form of pure Sonship in Christ and then out of one little seed—Christ is evolved a whole harvest of endless and ever-multiplying Christs. God coming down and going up—this is creation, this is salvation. In this plain figure of three lines you have the solution of a vast problem. The Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost ; the Creator, the Exemplar and the Sanctifier ; I am, I love, I save ; the Still God, the Journeying God, the Returning God ; Force, Wisdom, Holiness ; the True, the Good, the Beautiful ; Sat, Chit, Ananda ; ‘ Truth, Intelligence and Joy.’ ”—[‘ That Marvellous Mystery—The Trinity ’—1882.]

Minute discussions of a metaphysical Trinity will always have interest for the philosophical few, but the doctrine has reality for spiritual life only in so far as it can be related to the deeper spiritual needs and experiences of men. No one brought this out more clearly than Keshub.

## IV

Keshub has *helped us to see that Christian Institutions may be adapted to Indian conditions*. There can be no doubt that Christian ordinances as practised to-day,—Christian forms of worship and the forms of our Christian ministry,—all bear marked traces of adjustment to Western conditions, and not unnaturally so. Baptism, for instance, as practised in a modern Christian cathedral is something very different in form from that which Jesus submitted to in the river Jordan. The rite of Eucharist as celebrated in a modern Christian Church would hardly be recognized by a Christian of the Apostolic age as the same as that which he himself participated in with his fellow disciples. In the supper or Love-feast, common in the early Christian age, the ordinary Christian service of the modern Western Church, no matter of what denomination it may belong to, is something very different in form from that which prevailed in the time of Jesus and his apostles. The Bishop of Rome, or the Bishop of London, has a position and undertakes responsibilities differing very widely indeed from anything characteristic of the Bishops of the first Christian century. In all matters of this character there have been developments in Christian forms, and Christian worship adapted to the special conditions prevailing in Europe and suited to our changing needs and our traditions. The mistake we make is in thinking that our forms are necessarily adapted to the needs of Eastern lands. I venture to say, that there can be no rapid growth of a truly

indigenous Christianity in India so long as we insist on imposing Western forms of worship, ministry and church-government and Western forms of Church ordinances. India, like Europe, must have full liberty to work out its own forms of worship and church-government in accordance with its own genius and ancient traditions. The developments that may take place in this direction may no doubt startle us, as modern Christians, from Roman Catholics to Quakers, have one and all grown accustomed to derive their particular form or lack of forms from the New Testament direct. Keshub realized that forms of worship, ministry and church-government in India should be in full accord with India's traditions, customs and sentiment. In all matters of this character Keshub took a bold line as he saw very clearly that a mere imitation of Western Christian forms was utterly ill-adapted to India's genius. There is as much room for originality in the East in matters of this kind as in the West, and the Eastern Church is equally entitled with the Western Church to work out its own institutional life along independent and indigenous lines. The originality of Keshub in matters of this character may profitably be pondered by leaders of Christian thought and life in India.

# V

Keshub has *helped us, modern Christians, in recognizing that the essence of our religion is the life of the Indwelling Spirit of God.* There can be no doubt that the ordinary Western has a tendency to think of God as outside the world, in other words as transcendent, while

the average Oriental thinks of Him as within the universe or immanent. An unprejudiced student of the Christian Scriptures will recognize that the great Jewish prophets, including Jesus and the apostles, gave equal prominence to both aspects of the Divine Nature and Divine Life. "The Kingdom of God is within you" was the teaching of Jesus, and he devoted all his energies to the establishing of the divine kingdom in the hearts of men. "Is not your body a temple of the Holy Spirit?" is one of the searching questions of St. Paul to the earliest Christian converts. The new dispensation from the New Testament standpoint is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, and the fulness of His power became manifest at Pentecost. It is the Holy Spirit, according to the teaching of Jesus, that is to lead men through the ages into all truth and fulness of life. But notwithstanding all this, Orthodox Christianity through the centuries has been perhaps more Western than it has been essentially Christian. Church ceremonies and creeds have been more insisted on than submission to the rule of the Indwelling Spirit of God. Keshub saw this with the utmost clearness, and the Christianity of Western lands was in many respects a source of real disappointment to him. In the teaching of Keshub the doctrine of the Indwelling Spirit is constantly emphasised. The following taken from a lecture entitled "*Christian Mission Work in India*" delivered at the Dalhousie Institute, 1882, shows how strongly Keshub felt the need of this emphasis :—



" The missionaries stand back from the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. There is a stopping short at the Second Person of the Trinity. They ought to run further, and advance to the Third Person. Indeed so far as the intellect is concerned, I do firmly believe that there is no lack of recognition. There is an intellectual acquiescence in the three great truths of the cardinal doctrine of Christian theology. Theoretically the Father has been acknowledged, the Son too, and the Holy Ghost also. But, practically, the Holy Ghost has not been magnified to the fullest extent.....We wonder that in your dealings with our race you should speak almost exclusively of Him crucified, and throw into shade this great doctrine of the Holy Ghost. I cannot conceive Christ apart from the Father or the Holy Ghost. I cannot believe that you can commend Christ to our nation without bringing it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Philosophy and science cannot lead individuals or nations to Christ. The intellect of man, weak and unassisted, cannot of itself accept Christ. Nothing can achieve individual or national sanctification without the operation of the Holy Ghost. Have you not often complained, ye ambassadors of Christ, that though you have so often and so long preached Christ, yet the people rise not and are not stirred ? How can you expect them to rise unless they are roused by the Holy Spirit ? If you have no enthusiasm, how can you kindle enthusiasm in others ? I fear it is too true that you are guided in a great measure by your own judgment, and that there is too much of prudential calculation and earthly deliberation in your plans of operation. There seems to be more dependence upon the wisdom of committees and councils than upon the inspiration which comes direct from Heaven. In all things that you do, show by your devotion and enthusiasm that you always consult the Holy Spirit, and are led by His voice and animated by His living breath."

There can be no doubt that such teaching as this deeply influenced Christian missionaries in this land, and indeed Christian circles throughout the West. The West has never been without its Christian teachers who

have seen and emphasised the truth of the Divine Immanence and the doctrine of the Indwelling Spirit, but in recent years there has been a wide-spread revival of this aspect of Christian teaching. We are coming to interpret our Christianity in terms of the life of the Holy Spirit in man, rather than in terms of creeds and ceremonies. And when the future historian of Christianity will seek to trace their various sources the changes that have taken place in Western Christian thought in this direction, he will give full recognition to Keshub and other religious thinkers of the East.

## VI

Keshub has *helped us, modern Christians, to recognize heartily and sincerely the truth and the good in other religions.* Perhaps this is the crowning achievement in the religious teaching of Keshub. The idea of the harmony of all religions has come to be associated specially with his name, and here, I venture to say, he has exercised a deep influence not only on modern Christianity, but on the thought of the whole world. So far as we Christians are concerned, we had certainly moved very far from the sources of our religious authority, Christ and the New Testament. Jesus claimed that he came to fulfil rather than to destroy all that was good and true in the religious thought and life of previous ages, and that was the attitude of the early apostles and the Greek Fathers. To them Christianity was a fulfilment of all that was true and good not only in Judaism but in the paganism of Greece and

Rome. Pagan teachers like Plato and Socrates came to be regarded as in their way forerunners of the Christ. But there grew up in much of later Christian thought a hardness that characterised all non-Christian prophets and teachers as agents of Satan, and all non-Christian religions as inventions of the devil. All this was, in my judgment, a direct contradiction to the spirit of Jesus, who would not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. To-day the great body of Christians have come to recognize that truth is truth, wherever it is found, and that God is infinitely greater than the limited Deity of Orthodox Christianity. Herein the teaching of Keshub has had a world-wide effect on modern thought. In his lecture on "Asia's Message to Europe," 1883, Keshub said :—

"Whatsoever is true and good and pure is the creed of this Church. All that dishonours Christ it disclaims. Whatsoever is Christian and pure and holy my Church rejoicingly glorifies. The non-Christian Asiatic has his meekness, but I ask, is not that meekness Christian? The Hindu is forgiving, is not that forgiveness Christian? If the Muhammadan speaks truth, is not his truthfulness Christian? If the Buddhist is charitable, and is always going about upon errands of mercy, is not his charity Christian? Can there be any form of goodness or godliness which is not Christian? I do firmly believe that whatsoever is good and true and beautiful is of Christ. Truth is one, and recognizes neither caste nor colour. In the nature of things there is not, there can never be, a distinction between Christian truth and non-Christian truth, between Christian veracity and non-Christian veracity. It is absurd, preposterously absurd, to talk of two meeknesses, two humilities, two philanthropies, two purities, two chastities or two asceticisms, one Christian and the other heathen. No, there is but one truth possible, one love, one purity,

which is of God, and therefore of Christ. It follows, then, as an irresistible and necessary inference that in entering upon a Broad Church alliance with the diversified forms of goodness and purity in other sects you do not leave Christ behind, but bring to him all that is his Father's in other churches. Believe me, Asia's appeal to Europe is a Christian appeal. Asia calls upon Western nations to abjure sectarianism and join the Catholic Church, in the name of Christ, the Son of God. Nay, I would go further, and declare Christ to be the centre of this Broad Church. I have said that the vanguard of each sect will advance towards a common centre, and form the Catholic Church of the future. Who can better represent this centre than Christ Jesus ? ”

To these I would add the following inspiring quotation from the lecture entitled “*We Apostles of the New Dispensation*,” 1881 :—

“ We Hindus are specially endowed with, and distinguished for, the yoga faculty, which is nothing but this power of spiritual communion or absorption. This faculty, which we have inherited from our forefathers, enables us to annihilate space and time, and bring home to our minds an external Deity and an external humanity. Waving the magic wand of yoga, we say to the Ural mountains and the river Ural, Vanish and lo ! they disappear. And we command Europe to enter into the heart of Asia, and Asia to enter into the mind of Europe, and they obey us, and we instantly realize within ourselves an European Asia and an Asiatic Europe, a commingling of oriental and occidental ideas and principles. We say to the Pacific, pour thy waters into the Atlantic ; and we say to the West roll back to the East. We summon ancient India to come into modern India with all her riches and saints, her asceticism and communion and simplicity of character, and behold a transfiguration ! The educated modern Hindu cast in Vedic mould ! How by yoga one nation becomes another ! How Asia eats the flesh and drinks the blood of Europe ! How the Hindu absorbs the Christian ; how the Christian assimilates the Hindu ! Cultivate this communion,

my brethren, and continually absorb all that is good and noble in each other. Do not hate, do not exclude others, as the sectarians do, but include and absorb all humanity and all truth. Let there be no antagonism, no exclusion. Let the embankment which each sect, each nation, has raised be swept away by the flood of cosmopolitan truth, and let all the barriers and partitions which separate man from man be pulled down, so that truth and love and purity may flow freely through millions of hearts and through hundreds of successive generations, from country to country, from age to age. Thus shall the deficiencies of individual and national character be complemented, and humanity shall attain a fuller and more perfect standard of religious and moral life."

Humanity, to-day, in its search for fulness of life and truth is moving in the direction of a fundamental unity. We shall come to our own as brother-men, not by standing up for any particular 'ism' or the inherited tradition of any particular geographical area whether we regard them deep down in our hearts as right or wrong. We are true to the Divine within us only in so far as we are ready to pursue truth and follow the Divine Light even though the Heavens fall. There is a mighty task awaiting the modern world, no less than the reconstruction of the whole life of the world, in all its varied phases, on a basis of truth and justice and brotherly love. I would implore the young men of the New India of to-day to maintain, with Keshub, an open mind and an unprejudiced outlook, and be bound down by no slavish worship of the past, but follow Truth and Light into Freedom and Victory!

## **Chapter III**

### **ON KESHUB FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES**

#### **A PROPHET OF YOUNG ASIA**

*(By KALIDAS NAG)*

The 50th death anniversary of Keshub Chunder Sen (1838-84) celebrated recently, brings back to our mind the noble services rendered by that illustrious pioneer, to the cause of Asiatic renaissance. He was born within 5 years from the death of Rammohun Roy who, as is well-known, propagated the great truths imbedded in Persian and Arabic literature, who boldly championed the cause of Turkey in those days of Anti-Turk crusade and who was not unfamiliar with the philosophers and kings of far-off China. Devendra Nath Tagore, the spiritual successor of Rammohun, is known to have undertaken a rather risky voyage to China and when he had the pleasure of welcoming Keshub Chunder Sen, a class-fellow of his son Satyendra Nath Tagore, all three of them made a momentous voyage to Ceylon (27th September 1859), in course of which the old venerable leader collaborated spiritually with the young and audacious dreamers of a New India and a New Asia. Keshub was then barely twentyone but this grandson of Dewan Ram Comul Sen (the first native Secretary to the Asiatic Society of Bengal and the collaborator of eminent

orientalist like Wilson and Princep) must have caught the divine infection visiting the 'Golden Lanka,' realising the eternal role of India as the civilizer of the Orient. While a mere boy of fifteen as early as 1855 he was eagerly collaborating with eminent liberal missionaries like Rev. Long and Rev. Dall, running some sort of an *East and West* Association (British India Society). In 1859 he came to be the Joint-Secretary with Devendra Nath Tagore, of the Brahma Somaj when Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar resigned his secretaryship. To further the cause of the re marriage of Hindu widows, so dear to Vidyasagar, a social drama *Vidhaba-Bibaha* was staged by Keshub with his young friends of the evening school and the good-will Fraternity. A born leader of men that he was, Keshub was our first leader of youth. In 1860 he developed a veritable youth movement publishing a series of tracts (Young Bengal! This is for you, etc.), to rouse up the dormant spirit of the coming generation. Throwing career to the winds, resigning a promising post in the Bank of Bengal, Keshub started his apostolate, formed a *Sangat Sabha* (spiritual fraternity) to make intensive study of the Bible and other scriptures, as well as the works of modern thinkers like Theodore Parker and Prof. F. W. Newman, Hamilton and Victor Cousin. But it was never an isolated cell of transcendental meditation, for Keshub was a worker *par excellence*. The youth movements, and last though not least the philanthropic and humanitarian movements ever found in him an

ardent champion. He organised relief funds to mitigate the sufferings of millions in the North-Western provinces on account of a terrible famine in 1861. He organised an intensive campaign for the promotion of education in India and published an 'Appeal to the British Nation' which was circulated in England through his learned correspondent, Prof. F. W. Newman. This laudable championship of mass education within three years from the foundation of the first University in Calcutta, testifies to his prophetic vision. Ever backed by the venerable father of Rabindranath Tagore born (May, 1861) in this momentous year, Keshub started (August 1861), the *Indian Mirror* which came to be a most influential social and political journal. In 1862 he delivered that memorable address 'The Destiny of Human Life,' and in April that year he was elevated to the post of the Acharya, the Minister of the Bramho Somaj and was boldly encouraging the reform zeal of his young colleagues who were out for defying caste celebrating inter-marriages, courting social ostracism and even the risk of being disinherited. The vindication of the quality of man and man, of man and woman was thus boldly envisaged by Keshub as our practical social programme, nobly inspired by Rammohun Roy whose life work was passionately upheld against the attack of Christian Missionaries in the famous lecture 'The Brahmo Somaj Vindicated' in 1863 just 30 years after the death of Rammohun. Silent yet enduring work was done by Keshub and his colleagues by their



efforts to propagate education amongst our women-folk imprisoned in our home by stupid custom and a special journal for women *Bamabodhini* made its appearance in 1863. Thus the young men and women the real assets and potential builders of our nation were appraised as such and helped by Keshub to their feet. He was a flaming torch which lit up into a rare illumination not only the province of Bengal but also Madras and Bombay as well which he visited in 1864, and very soon came to him a great son of Gujrat who would carry the torch of social reform throughout the length and breadth of India, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, founder of the Arya Somaj. In 1867 the Prarthana Somaj also organised in Bombay under the inspiration of eminent reformers of Western India like Ranade and Bhandarkar who came into touch with Keshub during his second visit to Bombay. He had several conferences with Sir Henry Main then legal member of the Viceregal Council who introduced "the native marriage bill" providing a form of civil marriage and legal recognition for all those who were against caste and in favour of inter-marriage. Thus laying the foundation of national solidarity and consecrating his own Brahmo Somaj of India, Keshub sailed for England early in 1870 when he was barely thirty-two. Sailing on the 15th of February, he reached London on 21st of March and sailing again on the 17th of September he was welcomed back to India in October, 1870, when the Prarthana Somaj accorded a warm welcome to him

in Bombay. In the *soirees* welcoming him in London there were present Lord Lawrence, late Governor-General of India, the very Rev. Dean of Westminster, Stopford Brooke, Dr. Martineau, Louis Blanc and other celebrities while Prof. Max Muller, J. S. Mill, Grant Duff and others sent letters of cordial welcome. Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, Hony. Secretary to the East Indian Association spoke with Mr. Sen from the same platform when he addressed on the Female Education in India. He addressed also a big meeting celebrating the 54th anniversary of the Peace Society when Mon. Frederic Passay, Secretary of the Paris League of Peace came into personal touch with the great Hindu orator who also spoke against the liquor traffic in India. A great Muhammadan, Mr. Syed Ahmed was present in that memorable lecture 'England's Duties to India' (May, 1870), in which like a true patriot Keshub boldly exposed the shortcomings of the Anglo-Indian rulers and administrators of India. Thus long before the foundation of Indian National Congress Keshub opened the path of constitutional agitation to rouse England to her sense of responsibility with regard to India. In August, 1870, he had an interview with Queen Victoria and after splendid receptions in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds and Bristol (where he visited the tomb of Rammohun), Keshub was given a princely farewell in which not only the British but some continental scholars were present, *e.g.*, Prof. Albites representing the Society of Free Conscience and Progressive Theism of Paris. After his return he

was confronted with unsuspected and yet unsurmountable difficulties in building up an united reformed church ; and as several of his dear friends were leaving him and his own health was failing fast, Keshub formally announced his sublime dream of New Dispensation (January, 1880). He unveiled the first portrait of Rammohun Roy in Albert Hall on the 14th of January, 1881. Following in the footsteps of the Rajah, he inspired one of his disciples Mr. Girish Chandra Sen to undertake the publication of the first Bengali translation of the Koran with the commentaries. At the same time the breach with the orthodox Hindu community he tried to bridge over, by incorporating many of the poetic rituals and symbolisms of Hindu Religion and above all by establishing a spiritual communion with the unlettered sage of Dakshineswar, Ramkrishna Paramhansa, the *Guru* of Swami Vivekananda. On the 20th of January, 1883, he delivered through his noble address 'Asia's Message to Europe' what was practically his last testament and his noblest legacy to New India and New Orient which join hands today to salute the inspired prophet of our New Dawn. — "India and the World."

—From NAVAVIDHAN. February 22, 1934.

## THOUGHTS ON KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

*By* S. J. GOPENDRA ARJUN (*Silchar*)

Keshub Chunder Sen was born and brought up in an age which to all intents and purposes was one of a state of transition between one era already past and

gone and the other era about to dawn. He was indeed a thorough representative man of his days who was divinely inspired. Having left, for reasons of the difference of opinion, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore's altar of the Brahmo Somaj, and necessarily more or less the Maharshi's way of thinking and his method of self-realising and cultural process of evolutionary proceeding towards the attainment of a high ideal purpose, more socio-spiritual than national or international, Keshub Chunder Sen in company of a number of his fellow-believers and co-workers had established what was known as the Bharatvarshiya Brahmo Somaj. The original Brahmo Somaj founded and organised upon the doctrines and principles enunciated by Rajah Rammohun was more evolutionary *i.e.* a movement from within than revolutionary *i.e.* from without, split itself into two wings so to speak ; namely, the conservative and aristocratic community of the Maharshi's Adi Somaj and the Somaj led by Keshub. The saintly leader Keshub Chunder left the Adi Somaj and with this began his tribulations in life. He announced later in life the advent of Navavidhan.

Inwardly Keshub Chunder Sen was indeed a saint of saints. What spiritual hankering he had within his heart impelled him from stage to stage to elevate himself to the unique position of a God-intoxicated *bhakta* who came out of the temple of Navavidhan and appeared on the streets with his *Kirtan* parties in the city of Calcutta, in full ecstasy, clinging to the Divine Self, singing in chorus and practically dancing to the

ture of the Divine conductor of the Symphony of Navavidhan ; a veritable canvasser from the realm of God, broadcasting the Divine love and peace ; this humane man, embodying in himself the highest possible manifestation of the unity of humanity and divinity together. As a matter of fact, Keshub announced the divine message of bliss, deadening the eyes and ears of the unrighteous, and at the same time gladdening the hearts of the righteous. His faith in God-head was not merely a " pass-it-on " word of the lips, but a living expression of innermost conviction, practically realised, pervading all the recesses of his mind and heart. The portrait of the saint, hung just behind the platform of the Albert Hall in Calcutta, preserves in such a splendid manner ; the memorable figure of Keshub Chunder Sen—a sight indeed worthy of the gods to see and human beings to submit in reverence.

## (II)

The divinely-gifted Keshub having co-operated with Maharshi and participated in the original programme, left Maharshi and his group ; organised and established the Bharatvarshiya Brahmo Somaj and finally proclaimed his *God given faith as the New Dispensation*. These changes in a process of evolutionary enlargements of active programme and of expansion of functionary establishments, have indeed to be noted and noted with special care and attention by members of the younger generations. Keshub Chunder, who is styled and we suppose, fitly and aptly too, as Brahmananda or Brahmarshi, in the household of Navavidhan is no

longer a social or a spiritual reformer of the Maharshi's School, nor a nationalistic preacher and teacher only like Vivekananda, *but a prayerful saint ; and moves* not merely within the national-safety circles but in all the international-circles and groups in the wide world. It is perhaps time indeed that we take necessary notice of this dynamic force (as represented by Keshub) in modern Indian history. Long live Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen !\*

### KESHUB—A BRIDGE-BUILDER

In memory of Sri Keshub Chunder Sen, memorial meetings were held in Brahmo Mandir, Hyderabad (Sind) on January 8. Vaswani who presided said in the course of his tribute to Keshub Chunder Sen :

"Keshub ! A man of the future ! His time is not yet. Him I salute as a bridge-builder of the Future. His place is among the world's reconcilers, the Pioneers who work for unity of races and religions. "The object of life," said Augustine, "is to possess the

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\*Mr. Arjun is one of the best known men in the Surma Valley. His learning is wonderful and as an orator and a writer he has made a great name. He is a man of outstanding ability and is the author of a few books. He is a 'Hindu social reformer'. For sometime he was the Editor of "Janasakti" of Sylhet. At present, he is living an ascetic life at Silchar. He has a very high opinion on Keshub Chunder Sen. He was requested by me to write something about the Minister for "Navavidhan." He dictated his views then and there and I put them in writing.—Mono Ranjan Sen.

—*Navavidhan*, November 8, 1934.

vision of God." God-vision is the very heart of the message of Sri Keshub Chunder Sen.

The man was greater than all his work, his activities and organisations. Keshub practised God-vision in daily life. There is a revolt against religion. The revolt is spreading and still will spread. Let us not blame the young. They will not submit to forms and creeds. Life has departed out of these forms; and creeds are broken reeds. Churches and *samajes* need a new breath of the spirit. Where are the God-men?

A gift of God to us was this man Keshub. A man of God-vision! We did not treat him well. We have not realised yet the full measure of his spiritual greatness. Some reject him; some seek to imprison him in a cult. Pardon us, O thou son of Freedom! The future yet will vindicate thee!

### KESHUB—AN AWAKENER OF INDIA

He seems to come nearer to me as the years pass.

His was a voice of Awakening,—the most eloquent voice of his generation.

Thousands thrilled to his voice in the Town Hall and the Beadon Square. God gave him eloquence to win men over to the wisdom of higher life.

A patriot? Yes, Keshub was a patriot in the deepest sense of that word. He believed in the soul of his nation. He loved India in the wreckage of her splendour. He paid homage to the Glory,—the Glory that moved in the dim twilight of primeval history,—

the Glory immortalised in her ancient Literature and Art. He found that Glory enveloped by centuries of decadence. He felt that India could not be truly great again until she recovered her long-lost loyalty to the great Ideals built within her soul. So he deemed it desirable to organise a movement of reconstruction and regeneration. Hence his efforts to uplift Indian womanhood, to evolve a scheme of new education, to blend the Wisdom of Buddha and Isa with the Wisdom of Vedic Rishis.

Keshub was a prophet of unity. He preached the unity of science and religion. Science teaches us to be rational, critical. Religion checks the tendency to self-assertion, which is as irrational as it is irreligious. Egotism is a weakness of the modern temperament. We must correct egotism by reverence. We must combine criticism with prayer. Laplace said he had no need of the hypothesis of God. But Keshub spoke of religion as the very "science of God." Many, today, do not feel the need of God. Life's complexity and mechanical relations are multiplying; the sense of life as a pilgrimage is weakening. Prayer as a practical value; for prayer purifies and prayer releases inner energies.

What is the nation's greatest need today? God-consciousness! From unrest to unrest must India wander until she finds again the soul! India's problem is something bigger than that of "reforms". What India needs, what the World needs, is a new creation or regeneration. And there can be no regeneration of this ancient, gifted nation without a recovery of the spirit of prayer.



For one thing stands sure in all the ages of evolution, that from within comes the creative *Shakti* which makes a nation new and strong and free.

—T. L. VASWANI (*Navavidhan*, Feb. 22, 1934).

CHANDI CHURN BANERJI ON PT. SHIVA NATH  
SHASTRI'S HISTORY OF THE BRAHMO SOMAJ

[One of the open letters to Pandit Sivabath Sastri, Missionary, Sadharan Brahmo Somaj, from his devoted disciple late Chandi Charan Banerji (Published in *Navyavarat*, Jaishtha 1319, Bengali year (1912\*))]

Venerable Sir,

I have just finished reading the two parts of the History of the Brahmo Somaj written by you. It is needless to say that I proceeded to do so with reverence and respect for you. Our personal relations and the fact that you are the greatest in our dear Sadharan Brahmo Somaj, instinctively raise reverence and respect for everything that you do. I regret very much indeed, my inability to keep up direct touch with the activities of the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj, during the last few years, yet my experiences and that of many others regarding the necessary materials for a unity of the Brahmo Somaj are not less than yours. That is why I would begin by saying that it would have been better

\*This letter originally published in *Navyabharat* was reprinted in 'Keshub and His Opponents' G. C. Banerji, Gyan Kutir, Katra, Allahabad, Re. 1.

Translated by Prof. Niranjan Neogi, M.A.

for you not to set your hands to such a difficult task. In my opinion this work of yours has not been well advised or satisfactory. It cannot be called a full and proper history.

It speaks much of your infinite perseverance in this advanced age and in broken health you could take up this ponderous task and finish it. That your friends and advisers will feel grateful and will be loud in their praise. I have no doubt, I join them in this without any reserve. That you are a living embodiment of zeal, enthusiasm, perseverance and industry, your companions of the days may not know it so well, yet the perfect image of your extraordinary industry of by-gone days is stamped on our hearts. Not a line of that picture has yet been dulled. In those days it was your fiery zeal alone that made us dutiful and industrious. So I say, that I myself and many others like me were the first fruits of the field of work of your earlier days. Whatever we have been, good or bad, there can be no doubt that to you alone are due the praise and blame of our morals and defects. We grew up through your instruction and advice. I admit it today gratefully and unreservedly. Again, this boldness that urges me to write this open letter to you, indeed you alone are my preceptor even in this boldness and common sense. If fact, "if it be necessary for the good of many truth must be discussed openly and without fear."

A few years ago, when staying on the banks of the Ganges at Chandannagore, you wrote to me asking me to see you there. Accordingly I made an appointment

and paid you a visit. You had then finished the first part of your history. You were as yet undecided whether you would write the second and third parts or not. I find that in the first part of this history as it stands now, you have embodied more materials and incidental details than what it had as brought to an end at that time. The portions you very kindly read out to me made me think, and I told you so at that time, that the days for writing history according to the method adopted by you had gone by. Thereby to record some events one after the other is no longer considered history. Especially in a land like India the seat of an ancient civilisation, it is an imperative duty to draw the attention of the whole country and of the world to the source of the power of the Brahmo Somaj and to the good fruits resulting therefrom. No sooner did I give you some hints as to the materials that should form part of such history and request you to consult a certain learned gentleman of large experiences, you eagerly agreed to it and showed your anxiety to see him and at once took down his address on the back of a post card. On enquiring later on I came to know that having made an appointment with him you did see him with the Mss. of your history and read out to him some portions, but, whatever the reason might be, you did not seem inclined to take either his advice or his help. Why you did not do so is more than I know, but I do well feel that had that been done this book would have been a hundred times better than what it is. The pity is that in that case neither you nor your readers along with you would

have been deprived of the enjoyment of a good thing. Moreover, you would have spared yourself the fault of thoughtlessness, as well as waste of time in dealing with most insignificant matters, as in the present form of the book, and also not been the cause of pain to your readers.

Through an advertisement in the "Tattwakaumudi" the Bengali organ of the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj you have asked your readers to be so good as to write to you in case they notice any defect or mistake or if they think that any matter has been omitted. In the face of such an advertisement, where was the need for approaching you through newspapers instead of communicating to you direct what I had to say? In answer to this I have to mention that the various defects noticed in the reports read at the annual meeting of the S. B. S. from 1879 up till now and the consequent improvements of these defects felt necessary by the members, have always depended on the personal likes and dislikes of the authorities, and for the introduction of these methods and procedures yourself, the late Mr. A. M. Bose and others like you are responsible. There are yet many obstacles on the way of breaking through this barrier of individual likes and dislikes and preparing a suitable ground for each and every one. When it was growing more and more difficult for many to break through this barrier and make themselves useful, many religious and hungry souls of independent spirit even of this Somaj had gradually to stay away. I do not think it safe to give a list of such persons.

I have only to point out that the constructive work of the first few years of the S. B. S. would not have been possible without your energy and self-sacrifice. Not all the efforts of Anandamohan, Sivachandra and Durgamohan could have built the S. B. S. At the root of every great undertaking it is essential that there be a divine influence like self-sacrifice. It was you who made that self-sacrifice for the sake of the establishment of the S. B. S. and that was what made the Somaj a possibility. But it was you, again, who in later days, unwilling to be burdened with the rules which you yourself had made, in spite of your being still within the few of the Somaj, established the *Sadhan Ashram*, so that you might work independently and exercise your authority with comparative freedom from control. And when did you do it? When you saw that the authorities of the S. B. S. could not well keep you under control. In the earlier days of the Somaj as President and Secretary, you succeeded in doing Somaj work according to your ability but later on you could not do these things contentedly, you always felt distressed because of unpleasant incidents.

The late Mr. A. M. Bose possessed the capacity for working in consultation with others. His life-long education and training had shaped him into a power in the spirit of the West. You and the late Keshub Chunder Sen, though far from one another in power and ability, are really of the same nature and mettle. You and he are both powerful men fond of authority. The spirit of the eminent men among the Hindus is to

be found in you both. That is why you too, in imitation of Keshub started the Sadhan Ashram with a view to forming a separate body. But from lack of the brilliant abilities of Keshub, your new hangers on could not get any opportunity for showing their strength before the public. The reason that has made you keep away from the S. B. S. though you are in it, has also made you and the S. B. S. lose strength. It is too late now to remedy this weakness, nor will it ever be done. Just as the Navavidhan Somaj became devitalised towards the end of Keshub's life and after his passing away, so the S. B. S. also even during your life time has become similarly lifeless. Like delirious patients, both the Navavidhan and Sadharan Somajes are unable to diagnose their disease or to cure it. This impotence has entered your very bones and it makes me think that were I to point out the irrelevant and unnecessary matters dealt with in your history in a private letter, you would not perhaps set them right. Had you any idea of setting them right you would have done so before ?

## II

According to Hindu notions there is a thing called "evil astral influence." It has always been recognised by the Hindus that *Aslesha* and *Magha* bring on disaster. Although a teacher, a preceptor and a spiritual guide, although you might have very great respect for Keshub and might revere him, yet your "evil" influence is upon him. How is it that the disastrous evil

eye of the wicked star is working secretly ? Keshub has long been dead and no one would object to a reasoned, just and conscientious discussion about him. Although now an event much to be regretted, you have on the whole discussed the Cooch Behar marriage affairs in a fair manner. Yet with a little care it is possible to discover the fierce enmity concealed in your heart. But it is not necessary to take so much trouble to find out what feelings are within you. I shall first of all mention what has been universally condemned. You had even before this brought opprobrium upon yourself by giving an exaggerated description of an insignificant event of Keshub's student days in the life of the late revered Ramtanu Labiri. We have not yet been able to make out what induced you to attempt to give permanence to a mistake or carelessness of Keshub's earlier days in the life of Ramtanu Babu. In that biography you have, indeed, dealt of many people, introducing the subject matter by saying that you would say something about them. In these about whom you have said something or other, did you not find any fault, small or great, like the one about the examination incident in the case of Keshub ? Or, is it that while examining the times of so many people you could see only Keshub's fault ? "The fair moon itself has a stain on her" and this we find everywhere, but do you think that this anxiety on your part to vilify Keshub, while leaving aside the faults of others has been a deed consistent with your training, ideals, position and conscience ? You had set out to write the life of Ramtanu Babu,

where was the necessity for blackening the name of your preceptor and guide ? Could you explain this satisfactorily to your readers ? There would indeed have been some excuse for it had you set out to write the life of Keshub but in that big volume you devoted just a few pages to Keshub, and after dealing with all that was best in his many activities, had you such plenty of space at your disposal and was the urgency so great that had this affair about the examination not been mentioned your conscience would have rebuked you ? If, without writing for an answer, I take it for granted that you were the master of your pen and ink and that you had satisfied yourself with proper arguments that you had the right of paint Keshub like that in another man's biography, then why did you keep silent over more serious things about others ? Did not your conscience rebuke you there ?

It strikes us as very strange that you broached a subject at a place where it was unnecessary ; but when you did do so, it was an imperative duty to treat all in the same way and that would have been a becoming thing in you. But you did not do so, and for this, you have been taken much to task, yet it is much to be regretted that such adverse criticism has failed to rouse your sense of duty. In this history, under reference, too, you have discussed that unpleasant and unnecessary subject and have attempted to answer the criticisms that had come out in reply to your earlier discussion. From this it is easy to understand that you take the examination hall affair of Keshub's to be a thing of greater



seriousness than ordinary human carelessness and have got firm hold of it as an important event in the history of the Brahmo Somaj, like the ten years' settlement of Lord Cornwallis. You would not budge either. If, indeed, you refuse to let that incident go, it matters little, for we shall take it as a weakness on your part, but shall never consider it a fair or a proper thing to do and why not, I shall proceed to point out. You set out to write a history of the Brahmo Somaj, and there you describe the struggles of the revered Maharshi, it being on the whole excellently done. It is delightful reading and one feels inclined to praise highly the farsightedness and thoughtfulness of the writer. But why did you not feel it incumbent on you to place before your readers the spiritual struggles of Keshub? What right had you to betray this inherent weakness of yours? You have taken great pains to record the details of a boy of eighteen being taken to task and expelled for talking to another boy in the examination hall and also to defend your conduct in that connection! But when on the day of religious initiation of that powerful man the family priest of the Sens came to give initiations to the members of the family according to the family custom, the grown up boys of the home went through the initiations ceremony. The day before the boys were assembled together and were told about it Keshub also was one of them. He was a young man of a very quiet nature. Very meekly he informed his guardians and the priest about his objections. Even before this he had begun to follow high ideals by

coming into contact with the Brahmo Somaj, when this initiation ceremony came. The guardians of the house wanted to make the young men of the family take up its religious practices when Keshub's refusal to submit to this ceremony created a mighty commotion. Have you no knowledge of this ? Are you not aware that his guardians were bent on teaching him a good lesson that same night ? That day and on the morning of the next Narendranath and others were before the priest with their proper dress on them after their bath, but Keshub was nowhere to be seen. When seeing him seated quietly and alone in the outer parlour his guardian, with loud threats, was about to take him before the priest by sheer physical force, it was God Himself Who to save Keshub spoke through the family priest, who said, "no good comes out of such initiation by force. I am opposed to it. Let this turn go; it will be all right if the boy is given initiation next year. Give him time."

### III

Now, I put it to you : You wanted to write a history of the Brahmo Somaj and had you no knowledge of this event ? could you not perceive the greater fact that lay behind this great event concealed from the gaze of men ? strange, indeed ! Could you not see that behind this incident regarding Keshub's initiation there is evidence of an extraordinary greatness of that Mahatma whose noble virtues you have tried your best to discover. Then why this attempt at writing history ? Seeing preparations for the initiation going on at home, Keshub

went to Debendranath's house with a troubled mind and asked his advice. Were you not aware of the advice that the Maharshi gave to Keshub, or is it news to you ? You have not mentioned it and so let me go on. The Maharshi said, " It is not safe either to offer or to take advice in a matter serious like this. In such thing every one should be free and should be guided by his own light ("conscience"). How could you pass over Keshub's strength of mind, his earnestness and the great moment of trial evident in an event like this ? But where did you betake yourself instead ? To the task of examining in minute detail a bit of Keshub's carelessness, anxious to place it on record wherever and whenever you could find an opportunity for it ! It is not, indeed, very strange ? Will you not admit that conduct like this is unpardonable in those who are guides and preceptors of the people ? Does that noble spirit, that candour and pure zeal that made our hearts dance with joy, approve of this partiality stained with vilification ? Is this not your greatest weakness and that of your followers too ? Is it possible for religion to have any place against the inwards of this dangerous disease ? If you really make an attempt to rectify this wrong, only then shall I believe that the tears and sighs of your revered parents have not gone in vain ; else I shall take it that there is nothing too mean that men led by party spirit cannot do.

Like yourself, many of us, indeed, came to the Brahmo Somaj seeking only religion and to bless ourselves with the purer social life born of that religion.

but, alas, I have to say it with the greatest regret that religion, after all, is a personal attainment. Nowhere and in no age did ever exist, nor can ever exist, an impossible anomaly like what we call "a religious community." Religion can create parties, just as Navavidhan, Sadharan, etc., are separate parties, and the stronger the vested interests of such parties become, religion removes itself the more. You are the head of the Sadharan Somaj and I am prepared to examine impartially the way in which you have given undue prominence to insignificant people so as to match your own importance, but as this might mean doing much more evil than good to people in general, I refrain from it now, hoping to let you know about all this should you find it necessary, for the present I should like to draw your attention to a few very dangerous items, hoping that you would set these things also right.

Within a few days of Brahmananda Keshub's departure from this world, the Lord Bishop of Calcutta, the Paramahansa of Dakshineswar and the Pradhan Acharyya of the Brahmo Somaj came to see him. You have recorded the visits of these three, but either on the day that Keshub died or on the evening before that when the important members of the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj also went to see him, you were one of the party and I too was with you. Do you not remember how charming were his manners towards you even in the midst of the terrible agonies of his fell disease, and how he attempted again and again to speak to you? At the time of bidding farewell for the last time, do you not

remember his expressions of love and affection towards you, his heart-felt solicitude for union and the silent tears that all present there shed at his inability to express himself owing to the excruciating pain of the disease ? If that heart-rending scene of his singling you out of about a dozen of visitors and making an effort of speaking to you by seating you by his side be not engraved upon your memory for ever, then what have I to say ? I can only point out that the mistake of a certain worker of the Bharat Ashram and the consequent departure from the Ashram of the late Mr. Haranath Bose with his family could become material for history, but the last sight of this devotee and man of faith and his sweet and charming manner and the tears shed on that occasion could not be included in your history ! This is what I have to say. Moreover, although finding fault with the Bharat Ashram is a thing dear to the way you have characterised the late Mr. Haranath Bose unawares, has been, perhaps, that of a bird founding its own nest ! Had you any right to traduce the memory of a dead man before the public, so that while going to find fault with the management of the Ashram you should enter into such minor personal details, as Mr. Haranath Bose being rather lax in money matters ? Is this too material for history ? Is this improper and unnecessary discussion pleasant for his sons and daughters who are living yet ? The disembodied spirit of Mr. Bose will surely cry out at this, " Lord, save me from such friends ! " Such minor, personal matters have found place in your history, that

if your and our personal things were gone into at this rate, even you would say with sorrow, " Lord, where to stop ! " If the events of this long period from the birth of the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj uptil now were judged and criticised by the same standard as that of the insignificant happenings in the Bharat Asram, it would be difficult for us to maintain our prestige in an educated and enlightened community. If you permit, I am prepared to take it up, and if it be expected to do any good to Brahmos in general, it should certainly be done.

Respectfully,

Chandi Charan Banerji.

— *Navavidhan*, June 16, 22, 29, 1933.

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*Extract from the speech of Babu Narendra Nath Sen, Chairman, Reception Committee, All-India Social Conference, Calcutta, 1906.*

I feel a peculiar pleasure to welcome you to this conference, because it meets in a province which is known as the home of social reform, having been the birthplace of such distinguished social reformers as Rajah Rammohun Roy, Pundit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and of Babu Keshub Chunder Sen. It was from here that the tide of social reform surged into other parts of India, nearly a century ago, when the first of the great triumvirate, I have mentioned, led his crusade against the revolting practice of *Sati*. The next great victory of *social reforms* was achieved, just twenty-seven years later, by the passing of the Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, chiefly through the untiring exertions

of Pundit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. The extension of female education, the discouragement of early marriage, the emancipation of the Hindu widow the advocacy of temperance, and other beneficent works filled the life of Keshub Chunder Sen, along with the religious movement of the Brahmo Somaj.\*

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*From Navavidhan, Calcutta, January 14, 1926.*

## I. KESHUB THE MAN

(By G. C. BANERJI)

Keshub had a very amiable and attractive feature. While a boy reading in the school, I used to come to the Mandir occasionally. As he sat on the pulpit it seemed to me that a halo surrounded his face. I knew little about the Brahmo Somaj then, but I felt that when Keshub spoke a sweetness filled the whole Mandir and I was in a higher atmosphere. It was impossible for one to leave the Mandir before he stopped. On a Bhadrotsav occasion I went to the Mandir at about 8 in the morning. Keshub was conducting Divine Service. There were some most inspiring hymns and *sankirtans*. I went on listening and could not leave before 2 p.m. I did not till then feel that I was without food all the time.

Sometime afterwards a friend took me to the Lily Cottage, and I commenced attending the Sunday School there. At 1 p.m. Keshub used to appear clad in a loin cloth with a *gamcha* in his hand and a *lota* filled with

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\* Read “কেশবচন্দ্র ও বঙ্গ সাহিত্য” by Jogendra Nath Gupta.

water. He would talk to us and teach us all that was good. His sweet temper and kindly advice attracted all who came in contact with him. His words went deep into the heart and raised one to a higher and purer atmosphere. The Sunday School did us immense good.

His Town Hall and Beadon Square addresses were simply music. It is not possible to describe them adequately. I have not heard any other speeches like those, I think myself very fortunate that I had the opportunity to hear them. So anxious were people to hear him that all seats were filled up by European ladies and gentlemen as well as Indians two hours before the appointed time. When Keshub rose to speak all sound was immediately hushed. His words were audible at the farthest corners. Every one left the place with a deep and lasting impression. His influence was not confined to the Brahmo Somaj but reached all parts of the country.

He was a child with children, a philosopher among philosophers. It was astonishing how a comparatively youngman like him could utter such deep and inspiring words. Surely he was an inspired man. Though he was undoubtedly a very great preceptor, he was dead against গুরুগিরি (claim to infallibility as a preceptor). I have little doubt that he would have disliked the idea of keeping a pulpit vacant in a public Church after the death of a Minister. It was a pleasure to be in his company. He used to infuse a good spirit in a nice way. Keshub's hand was in every good thing. He



was a champion of purity ; he worked for temperance, moral training, education and emancipation of women, popular education, social reform, innocent amusement.

Though so amiable, he was not a weak man. Where principle was concerned, he was as firm as could be : no one could move him from his convictions.

He was a very loving man ; he was the only man I have seen who could really love his enemies. Being so cruelly and unjustly treated by his opponents, he never used any harsh words about them ; and so loving was his nature, that when any one came prepared to insult him, he could not gather courage to open his lips in his presence.

A few days before Keshub's departure from this world, Pandit Shivanath Shastri and his party went to see him. The doctors in attendance had given strict orders not to allow any visitor. It somehow reached his ears that Shivanath had come. Keshub at once sent for him and his party. I was present there. When Pandit Shivanath reached near the bed on which Keshub was lying, the latter at once spread his arms and fastened Shivanath in a tight embrace, and in great emotion said "শিবনাথ এসো" (come Shivanath); and tears began to flow from his eyes.

The first funeral I ever attended was that of Keshub. That was the first spontaneous gathering of men of all creeds and colours—European and Indian—to do honour to a great man at the last rites. The scene at Beadon Square and at Nimtala Ghat was beyond description. The entrance to the Ghat was packed to the utmost.

A number of Hindu ladies being unable to reach the place where the body was kept, went down to the Ganges bed and wading in mud reached the place with difficulty, crying 'let us see the साधु पुरुष (saint). This shows how dearly he was loved even outside the Brahmo Somaj.

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## II. BRAHMANANDA SRI KESHUB CHANDRA

To adequately speak of Keshub and form a true and correct estimate of his life, mission and character is almost an impossible task. It is easier for us to cross the Alpine mountains or fathom the depth of the Atlantic than to measure the length and breadth, height and depth of the sublime life of that illustrious son of Bengal Keshub Chunder Sen. His life was a wonder of wonders—more wonderful than the so-called seven wonders of the world. We don't indulge in hyperboles but speak only truth when we pronounce this our humble opinion of him. What is true of the prophets of the older dispensations, is more forcibly true in case of the chief Apostle of the New Dispensation. While the prophets of the other dispensations represented one or two special aspects of the Divine character or one or two previous dispensations Keshub Chunder represented many sides of Divine Character and almost all the previous dispensations of the world. It took more than four thousand years to understand Sri Krishna and more than two thousand years to understand Jesus and Satya Singha and volumes have been written about their life and

mission, yet their lives are to many deep and inexplicable mysteries and unexplored regions. Oh ? How many commentaries of the Gita and the New Testament have been written yet more are still forthcoming almost every year. The truth is, the life and teachings of the prophets of the dispensations have their beginning but no end. They are both simple and complex, partly revealed and partly unrevealed ; to the unbelieving critics, the prophets are so many enigmas, subjects of historical comments and antiquarian researches but to the faithful, they are heavenly mannas and hidden treasures which eternally feed the soul and enrich the mind, sweeten the heart and prepare us for journey heavenward. Such indeed is the life of Keshub Chunder Sen and the more I ponder over it, love and meditate on it, I am unconsciously lifted up and I feel I am nearer my God and my whole life is sweetened by the ambrosial odours of heaven. I have studied Keshub's works almost all throughout my life, his sermons (আচার্যের উপদেশ) were my food and drink, guide and solace in my earlier days and his prayers are now my daily companions in my devotions. He is my heaven appointed Acharjya and I find joy immeasurable when through the infinite mercy of God, I am united with him in spirit. He has ever and anon distinctly forbidden us to approach him except through God as our infallible guide and medium. He compared himself to a fish swimming and playing in the water of the Divine presence and asked us never to take him out of that water but accept him as he is in God. Whenever I see my God and am absorbed

in his sweet and all-encompassing presence, I feel united with my beloved minister Keshub Chunder. Whenever I love my God as my Father and Mother and men and women as my brothers and sisters. I am enlivened by the touch of Keshub's spirit. Whenever I sing the name of God with Bhakti and do His will and am united with all the prophets and sages of the world in spirit and truth, I become at one with Keshub whenever I have true faith, purity and love, Keshub dances and rejoices in me. There is absolutely no way to Keshub except through God. The more we become God-intoxicated and God-inspired, the more we are enabled to know Keshub and be united with him.

Such indeed and more is our beloved minister Keshub Chandra Sen. Whosoever seeks to know him and the dispensation he represents, let him first seek and find God and be united with Him in faith, purity and love, then and then only he will be able to know Keshub and the New Dispensation which God in His infinite mercy revealed unto Keshub for the salvation of the world. May God bless us and enable us to be united with Keshub Chunder through God. Amen.

Hope Cottage, Tangail, SASI BHUSAN TALUKDAR.  
Bidhan Naimisharanya,

23-12-25.

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### III. KESHUB'S POSITION IN THE BRAHMO SOMAJ

[By NIBARAN CHANDRA MOOKERJI]

The lack of a proper appreciation of the position of Keshub Chandra Sen is causing much mischief. Some

look upon him as a veritable prophet and allot to him a rank equal to Christ or Buddha. There are others in the Brahmo Somaj in whose estimation he was of no great consequence. Both these views are doing much harm. A proper appreciation of his life and position—of the importance of his work and teachings—will help the Brahmo Somaj to obtain the importance it deserves. By failing in such an appreciation friends and enemies of Keshub are equally lowering the Brahmo Somaj in public estimation. Some of the New Dispensation people by attempting to raise Keshub too high have created an atmosphere from which men turn away with disgust ; and those who disown his services altogether to the country are equally disliked for want of a sound judgment, and perhaps for cherishing secret feelings of improper hostility towards him. It is very necessary that proper notions should be entertained about Keshub's position. He has himself declared it in unmistakable terms. Has he not said that he was "*tremendously real*" ? We have no reason to ignore his own words, his own perception of his own powers. An attention to them will rectify our error—will do justice to him and to the whole Brahmo Samaj.

There are on the one hand, extreme New Dispensationists who are either members of his own family, led away by family feelings to cherish an undue regard for him, and his class friends who have a partiality for him which though not right is yet pardonable. There are on the other hand a class of mostly young people of the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj who never had occasion to

come in contact with Keshub and who never have taken any pains to read his life and the record of his teachings; and who through prejudice have been fed with misconceptions about his sayings and doings. It is a good sign of the times that casting off prejudice many elderly members of the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj are now studying his teachings and the work he has done.

Shortly after the promulgation of the New Dispensation, about the year 1881 or 1882, Raja Shib Chandra Banerjee of Bhagalpur saw Keshub Chunder at Calcutta, at his Lily Cottage. Before this the Raja had no personal communication with him. At the interview naturally the conversation turned upon great men; and Keshub Chunder expressed the opinion that the eminent men of the world no longer seemed to be such gigantic persons as they used to be in times past; no longer such towering poets as Shakespeare or Milton or such towering individuals as Jesus or Buddha or Chaitanya or the like do now appear. It seems as if their age has gone by, and now men of inferior stamp come for the good of the world. It seems Keshub felt this from his own case. He found himself to be much lower than the previous great men of the world but still much above the ordinary types of men. In his anniversary lectures, he always maintained this view; and he has consistently throughout his life expressed it and acted upon it. In one of his lectures he shrank from calling himself a prophet; he said he was far below a prophet; he was only a singular man; he had sins and vices, and could not dare to stand in the same category with the

holy prophets. This view he always maintained. In estimating his character and position we must always keep this in mind.

In his "*Jivanveda*," in one of the last Chapters does he not allude to it specifically ? Does he not say it was an incorrect view, an untruth—to class him with prophets ? Tremendously real as he was he would not have said all this, if he did not feel it—find it—to be the truth. He felt he was a sinner and in comparison with him the prophets were as if without sins ; and this, bold and truthful as he was, he gave out without any reservation. If we forget this we do an injustice to him.

On the other hand, if we overlook his peculiarity—his actual greatness—we do him wrong. Where can we find such exalted saying as in his writings ! In that period of unbelief and faithlessness who could have called youngmen to such stern faith in God and Providence as he did ? Indeed he was a seer—a Rishi—who did see God, not in imagination but actually as he can be seen—as the unseen can be seen and felt. He has repeatedly said this in his teachings ; and this too without any reservation. He was veritably a singular man—not an ordinary individual—called by Providence in His wisdom to bring back His children to Him, to the path of faith and purity. In the days of Keshub, were not the schools and colleges generally filled with good boys,—boys who were good in studies as well as in moral conduct ? Whose influence was it that saved them from the path of scepticism and bad life ? Was he not working at the bottom of this ? One has

carefully to study his teachings, his lectures, his sermons, to be convinced of this. What an earnest life he had—a life devoted entirely to the cause of piety and religion and God. In the Sunday School that he conducted at the Adi Brahmo Somaj house in 1860-1862, the period of laying the foundation of his work, how the young people and old men, in numbers too, gathered with enthusiasm and stayed patiently even in hot summer days with the burning sun over their heads, up to twelve o'clock in the noon, to hear his stirring lecture and teaching ! All these records have to be studied and then only can one understand what influence Keshub exercised and what enthusiasm he created. All this was no small matter ; and youngmen now-a-days cannot and should not ignore it.

Culture implies very largely the possession of a capacity to recognise the worth of character. The Architect of the world has it in infinite perfection. Society is constructed on the principle of appreciation of character. Herein we have all shades of character within our observation. Willingly, or unwillingly, being in society, we are always placed in the midst of human characters, we have always to deal with them. In fact they form the school in which we are trained up. The gradations in society, the ranks into which society is divided are meaningless without this appreciation. This kind of gradation does not exist among the lower animals ; they need it not. Among men undoubtedly it is of very great help in the formation of moral and religious culture. Different men, as in other things so



here, have this capacity in different degrees. It appears Keshub Chandra had it in a highly developed form and this helped him to appreciate the worth of the characters of the great men of the world and to proclaim the New Dispensation. He was ever ready to take lessons from all. He has himself said that no one could come to him without his deriving some lesson from his character. We must not ignore this view. We must accord him the peculiar position he claims for himself, and which his life and teachings justify. He was indeed an extraordinary man—a teacher of humanity,—whose life draws us heavenward. The Brahmo Somaj ought to recognize him duly.

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#### IV. THE GREAT LESSON OF BRAHMANANDA

[By S<sup>J</sup>. LALIT MOHAN DAS ]

“Life—one’s own life—is the greatest of all the Vedas—the highest of all the scriptures of the world,” says Brahmananda Keshub Chandra in his spiritual autobiography—the Jeevan-Veda. To study one’s own life, its ups and downs, its joys and sorrows, its trials and temptations, its successes and failures, in a prayerful spirit, gives one a true insight into the inner meanings of spirituality. Keshub was a saintly man, a seer of deep spiritual wisdom, a *Yogi* not of the type that renounces the world and becomes indifferent to the sorrows and sufferings of humanity but one who realises his highest self, the Divine in him, in the manifold activities of this life. His was a life of many-sided activities. He was in the world but not of the world.

He was intoxicated with the love of God, lived in his constant companionship, drew inspiration from Him in all the concerns of life. The lessons he taught by his life, deeds and speeches, are briefly embodied in that beautiful book—the Jeevan-Veda. His highest teaching consists in appealing to man to study prayerfully his own life and to realise directly the dealings of Divine love in the heart of men—His Lila. We may find the manifestation of God in the wonderful phenomena of nature. We may appreciate His love in the saints, in their struggles and victories. But all the knowledge of spiritual life we derive from these is indirect. The only direct knowledge of the secret working of Divine love that we can acquire, is derived when we look within and study prayerfully the events of our own life. Puny and insignificant as we are, yielding to temptations every moment of life, God dwells in every one of us. No event of our life, not a single drop of tear, not a sigh, is without significance. That saintly woman, Madame Guyon, in the early years of her devotion and struggles was once seized with despondency, and despaired of Divine companionship. Through God's grace at this critical moment of her life she met a Franciscan Monk and sought his advice. He patiently heard her case, pondered a while and said, "Your efforts have been unsuccessful, madame, because you have sought without what you can only find within. Accustom yourself to seek God in your heart and you will not fail to find Him." "Having said these words," says Madame Guyon herself, "the Franciscan left me. They were

to me like the stroke of a dart which pierced my heart asunder. I felt at this instant deeply wounded with the love of God, a wound so delightful that I desired that it never might be healed. These words brought into my heart what I had been seeking so many years. I told this good man that I did not know what he had done to me ; that my heart was quite changed ; that God was there : for from that moment he had given me an experience of His presence in my soul as not merely an object intellectually perceived, but as a thing really possessed after the sweetest manner. "Study then your own life in a spirit of prayer, with your eyes turned towards Heaven ; you will find therein the direct dealings of God with you. His love and mercy manifested in your struggles, in your sorrows and sufferings, in your joys and happiness. Sorrows and sufferings, disgrace and humiliation are not in vain. It is through them that we find God, our beloved one, nearest to our heart. He gives us wounds and He Himself heals them. We have read of the parable of the " prodigal son," the story of the " lost sheep". We are inspired by the Divine love manifested therein. But when we study the incidents of our own life in a prayerful spirit, we find those very truths, the manifestations of Divine love realised in our own life, and we perceive that " we live, move and have our being in him." " Know thyself " was the trumpet call of the Greek sage, Socrates, to mankind. **আত্মানং বিদ্ধি—** Know thy own self—was the call of the Rishis of this ancient land, " Study the scripture of your own life,"—

is the call of the modern saint, Keshub. Keshub realised the inner meaning of life's history, the manifestations of Divine love through it,—His *Leela* in individual life. He remained awaiting His inspiration—His *adesh* in every concern of life and guided his own life according to the command of God. He also asked the seekers of God to study the workings of God's mercy in their life, to wait for a call from Him, and to regulate life accordingly. God reveals Himself in the heart of man, He shows His love for man in the events of life. We are to direct our eyes within and see the manifestations of Divine love in our own life—this was the greatest lesson taught by Brahmananda Keshub Chandra. May we his humble followers realise this truth and surrender ourselves to the love of God.

### V. A PROPHET OF HOPE

On the 8th of January, 1884, Keshub Chunder Sen left his mortal frame. A new generation has since arisen for whom he has almost passed into history. Yet, after the lapse of nearly half a century our people, irrespective of their creeds, are anxious to pay their homage to him. They feel his presence in their midst and derive hope and strength from his life and work. Instead of widening the gulf that separates the present generation from Keshub, the years have only brought them together. He seems to have risen from his ashes to inspire his people with new hope, and to instil into their minds the faith and love that was in him, to mine their path and guide their conduct. Where is

the secret of this power ? Was it because he was a great social and religious reformer and a great orator who spoke with prophetic zeal and authority ? Keshub Chunder was all that and something more. He was a representative man—one of those whom, the *Geeta* tells us, God sends unto this world whenever men forget their mission in life ; abuses, intolerance and insincerity reign supreme ; and religion becomes an object of derision. He came with a message from on high, sought to purge religion and society of their abuses, and preached love, liberty, and brotherhood. Keshub himself said that " if humanity, faith and holiness are combined, they concentrate the whole spirit of the sermon on the Mount." And here lies the secret of the dynamic current with which the words of prophets are winged. It was because Keshub Chunder Sen believed that he came with a message, fearlessly preached God and Eternity, and personified in himself the high ideals of purity and love, that his memory is embalmed as a precious legacy by millions of his admiring countrymen.

To appreciate Keshub Chunder Sen and his work one must have an insight into the doctrines of the New Dispensation—founded by him—which is essentially a religion of harmony and synthesis. One God, one Church, one Scripture—that was his ideal. But this ideal was not to be realised by iconoclastic methods but through forbearance and a spirit of synthesis which, while emphasising differences, does not overlook the fundamental unity of the spiritual experiences

of mankind. Keshub saw that Truth is not the monopoly of any sect or creed. The *spirit* of Christ and Christianity as much appealed to his catholic mind as did Hindu idolatry which he described as "nothing but the worship of a Divine attribute materialised." If the material shape is given up, he said, "what remains is a beautiful allegory or picture of Heaven's dispensation." His love and reverence for Christ and Christianity were equally inspired by a true conception of their *spirit*. "The true spirit of Christianity shall be accepted by India. There are thousands amongst my countrymen who deny that, but I for one so long as I shall live, shall continue to say that the real spirit of Christ India will one day receive," so spoke Keshub Chunder Sen. His words have proved true. India has imbibed the *spirit of Christ*, and is anxious to see his precepts of Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man translated into affairs of men and nations.

Keshub Chunder Sen loved his countrymen with an apostolic fervour. He was a prophet of nationalism and preached it at a time when the influx of Western civilization was exercising a disintegrating influence on our national life and ideals. "Truth is not European," he declared before a European audience at a meeting of the Swedenborg Society in London, "and it would be a mistake to force European institutions upon the Hindus, who would resist any attempt to denationalize them." But his nationalism was not a thing apart from religion; it was a part of his theology, a fulfilment of

his ideal of the perfect man. He loved his country and countrymen because he loved God. As a prophet of synthesis, of harmony, he could easily discern the best traits in European civilisation and culture and was supremely anxious to weave them into the older civilization of his own country. But he was proud of his own nationality and of his oriental birth. It was in Asia, he never forgot, that Buddha, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Chaitanya and Ramkrishna saw the light, received the divine message and revealed those sublime truths which have brought solace and comfort to suffering humanity. "When I say, I have seen my God, I have heard my God, I say as an Asiatic's boast that he has seen the invisible Spirit, it brings him no credit whatever. *But not to see his God is to him shame, humiliation and death.*" "If you wish to regenerate India, make religion the basis of all your reform movement." Such was the basis of Keshub's patriotism. Attempts at social or political reconstruction without religion he regarded as "white-washing the edifice while the foundations are so weak and cannot bear the super-structure." That was Keshub's message to his contemporaries and will bear repetition to-day.

—Editorial, "Forward," January 8, 1926.

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## BRAHMANANDA KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

### *Fifty-first Ascension : Anniversary Meeting*

At the Albert Hall, Calcutta, on Tuesday, the 8th January, 1935, at 6 p.m. President, the *Hon'ble Raja*

*Sir Manmatha Nath Ray Chowdhury, Kt. of Santosh,*  
said :—

Ladies and gentlemen,

To me it is a great privilege to be called upon to fill the Chair of the meeting. The occasion which has brought us here together, this evening, is hallowed by the sacred memory of a superman, whom India delights to honour and even worship, as a seer and a prophet, although he fell asleep in God long long ago.

In the cycle of time, I mean in the natural process of evolution men come and go. Life and death are mysteriously interwoven, the one is inseparable from the other, the creative forces,—such are the inscrutable ways of Providence, are intermingled with the super-human energy that destroys and annihilates under the natural laws. That is why emotional Byron cried out in grief and despair, " what shadows we are and what shadows we pursue " ! Yet at times, exceptional though they are, men and women are born who defy death in their bid for the eternal life. No doubt they shuffle off their mortal coil ; for, the flesh which has been rightly described as a muddy vesture of decay is ephemeral and can only be a temporary abode of the soul. But in respect of their lives it is merely a change or a phenomena of the material world. Death in such cases fails to write on their real identities the melancholy words, *hic jacet*.

" The great Keshub Chunder Sen was one of those who are born to live through eternity, knowing no decay or end. Truth is eternal and he lived in truth.



Faith is perpetual and he lived in faith. Love is indestructible and he lived in love. Truth, faith and love combined to eternalise his holy existence. If my analysis is correct or comprehensible, the question inevitably arises whether in our present-day attempts to direct our will and energy through new channels, which the new environment of our life has opened before our eyes, to achieve those new results which loom large on the intensified vision of new India, we could accept him, although no more in the land of living, as one of our trusted preceptors, guides or leaders. I would seriously ask you to consider, whether or not, it is essential for us to look back to the glorious past with a view to face with courage and wisdom the difficulties with which we are now confronted in our grim struggle to reach the Promised Land. To my mind it will be nothing short of calamity if the present generation think that our great leaders of the past are dead and gone and can no longer lead us from within the melancholy vault of death covered by cypress gloom. The solidarity of our people was the essence of the religion for which Keshub Chunder lived and died. It was the very dream of his life—he was verily an apostle of unity and harmony. He strove hard to make our conglomerated masses a homogeneous whole. His exuberant love for truth, justice and equity enabled him to leave behind his earthly career examples which we should do well to follow. I can hardly imagine of a man, still living with us, however great and mighty he may be, who cannot with advantage pause for a moment in the run of life to

ponder over the excellent precepts and parables of Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen and draw inspiration from his glorious deeds and achievements. If India is ever to be great and if our people are ever to march abreast with the progressive nations of the world our people must maintain as much real contact with our mighty dead as with those who are considered in the material sense as living forces. I firmly believe that the problem of religion, to the holy spirit of Keshub Chunder Sen, was the problem of our national existence. He felt, as no other man had felt before, that faith and truth constitute the panacea for all the ills from which our self-forgotten nation has been suffering so long. His temple of worship was a nursery of honour and principle. He considered integrity of character and social sympathy to be indispensable if his people were to become great, and the mission of his life was to strive and strive hard to provide the strongest possible foundation for national character. He was not an ascetic in the ordinary sense of the word and in reality he was a man of broadest social imagination. In all spheres of action, as you all know, the paths leading to reforms are thorny and beset with difficulties of bewildering number and variety. Keshub Chunder was born at a time when our society refused to be reformed. But he possessed an unconquerable will and courage. When his practical mind with super-natural passion for action received an unfolding for a mighty purpose he never faltered or turned back from his determination—he made our society agree to be reborn into new ideas. He thus paved the way to

moral and intellectual development of our people. He opened before their mind's eyes the vista of a new life full of promises. I am a Hindu bred and brought up, but I have said what I have said with a clear conscience, Greatness is much too great to be encompassed within communal or religious limits. Sectarianism has no place in hero-worship as described by Carlyle in his inimitable style. The results which emanate from real greatness are the common heritage of humanity and constitute those bonds which bind together the different peoples of the world as members of a great family, commonly known as human race. Any way, like Emerson we must learn to look for the permanent in the mutable and fleeting and that though abyss open under abyss and opinion displace opinion all are at last content in the eternal cause. The sweetness and geniality of Keshub Chunder's nature, the purity of his character, the saintliness of his soul, his life-inspiring words, his supernatural eloquence and his wonderful spiritual achievements, I have no manner of doubt, shall continue to cheer us, comfort us, as we go on fighting the battles of life. His life which inaugurated a new era in the spiritual and intellectual history of India is a guarantee that Providence has yet a great destiny in store for our motherland. It stands to reason that the country which produced such an epoch-making man may well look forward hopefully to the future.

Mr. A. Iqbal said that the age of Keshub represented a transitional period which was the precursor of a mighty revolution. In an equally transitional period

that they lived the speaker was sure that although Keshub Chunder was not living, his spirit was still alive and working in their midst. He was one of the great leaders in the history of mankind and the young men of to-day would realise and appreciate his ennobling teachings better than they did.

Speaking as an English Unitarian Miss Margaret Barr said that when Keshub went to England it was the Unitarians who accorded him welcome, it was in the Unitarian Churches that he addressed most of his meetings in England. The Unitarians had always been great friends of Keshub Chunder. Miss Barr said that Keshub preached a true religion, a religion, which he said, must be emotional as well as practical and devotional. The speaker outlined the sermon of Keshub Chunder Sen which, she said, demonstrated the unity of faith between the religion of India and that of the Unitarians.

The speaker concluded by saying that the finest and the most worthy memorial of Keshub Chunder Sen would be to play the instrument of religion as he played.

Sj. Hemendra Prasad Ghose said that there could be no greater truth to the self-forgetfulness of the nation, referred to by the President than that the anniversary meeting was organised by the Brahmo Samaj and not by all sections of the people. People might think that Keshub Chunder's contribution to their national growth was confined in the realm of religion. But, considering the age in which he was born, he might rightly be

called the prophet of that age. It was not a fact that the Hindu Society of his age or at any other age refused to be reformed. On the other hand, it required the lead of an able reformer like Keshub Chunder to take up the work of social reconstruction. Very few people fully realised that Keshub Chunder was really one of the makers of New India.

In the field of politics Keshub Chunder stood for a synthesis between the ideals of the East and the West. Although a nationalist to the very marrow of his bones, he did never surrender his individuality as a Bengalee.

Indian journalism owed a deep debt of gratitude to him. "Indian Mirror" was practically his handiwork. Through journalism he wanted to serve both the classes and the masses. It was why he started "Sulabh Samachar", a cheap Bengali periodical for the education of the masses. He also raised his voice of protest against the excise policy of the Government.

At a time when there was no public lecture-hall in Calcutta except that of the Hindu College and Medical College, he founded the Albert Hall and thus created a platform for free expression of individual opinion. In short, Keshub first laid the foundation upon which other religious and political leaders of Bengal worked.

Prof. S. C. Mahalanobis read an interesting paper on Keshub's Life and Teachings. Miss Suniti Gupta also addressed the meeting.

After several other speakers had addressed the gathering the meeting terminated.—A. B. PATRIKA.

—*Navavidhan*, January 10, 1935.

## GIFTS OF ACHARYA KESHUB CHUNDER

*By* SATISH CHANDRA CHAKRABARTY, M.A.

(of the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj)

*(Translated by Premen Ray)*

[Being substance of a Bengali lecture delivered at the memorial meeting held on the 8th January 1936 at the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj Mandir. Rev. Mr. Chakravarty is a missionary of the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj and the minister-in-charge of Bhowanipore Brahmo Sammilan Somaj, Calcutta, and as such his extempore words, carry special significance and weight.—Ed. N.]

The class of super-men to which Keshub Chunder belongs—their achievements and position in history are generally the subject of deliberation in memorial meetings such as this. I was not expected to speak anything tonight, and therefore I did not come here prepared for it. At the behest of the President, I had to stand up to speak a few words. After making a short mention of three things I will proceed to lay before you in what I am personally indebted to Keshub Chunder in my religious life.

Firstly, Keshub Chunder by teaching to set a high premium on conduct supported by conscience has ushered in a New Age in all regenerative endeavours behind the history of the Indian nation and religion. It was a time-honoured prevalent belief that the main traits of character of the people of India were liberality, humility and meekness. Now to the character of that meek-natured Indian people has been added,—for the sake of preservation of ideal, Heroism,—for benevolent deeds. Sacrifice,—for stemming what is unreal,

unjust, unholy, Indomitable Determination. Such an outlook has found its expression, in the character and religion of India as a nation, and it did find its start by the teaching of Keshub Chunder.

Secondly, it was Keshub Chunder who taught us to incorporate in our individual spiritual culture the cultures of all great Founders of Religions of all climes and ages. For food and drink of his body man does not discriminate whether they are indigenous or foreign; but for food or drink of his soul man before did make distinction between foreign and indigenous. Corn grown in one country can go to build healthy bodies of the people of another country; but man used to think before how with foreign religious sentiments he could maintain the health of his soul. Keshub Chunder taught us there is none alien to religious experiences. *His teaching was not only this, that truth has to be collected from all quarters. He has said that unless and until we cultivate the religious experiences of the ideals of the saints and sages of all countries as a part and parcel of our own religious Saithan or culture and assimilate the same and convert them into very blood and sap of our soul, our religious culture does not attain perfection.*

Thirdly, it is discernible in the history of our Bengal that owing to Keshub Chunder, the Province of Bengal has earned honour at the hands of other Provinces and has gradually become fastened in bonds of fellowship with them. He held up Bengal as a sister to other provinces of India and other nations of the world. As

*a result of this kinship formed between Bengal and other provinces, in subsequent years the Indian National Congress found its birth ; and Keshab Chunder is the first inaugurator of the kinship.*

Now I wish to tell you about the relation between *Acharya* Keshub Chunder and my individual life. I did not see him with these eyes, but his portrait is very bright before my mind's eye.

Pandit Shivanath used to say : Religion is not only a matter for studying, hearing and preaching ; if religion be true it can be seen. Chaitanyadev—well—spoke few words. He preached his religion to the world by example of his own self. True it is that Keshub Chunder has left us many teachings, but in our religious life more than his precepts—what kind of a Being he was !—that Being's Magnetism was far more powerful. He was a God-possessed man. In his up-risings, down-sittings, eating, he always revelled in God. All the day's work—even works pertaining to physical body—he could not help including within the premises of God-intercourse. How beautiful is the bathing ritual laid down in his "New Samhita"—as if it is not a bathing in water but in God ; as if not a pouring of water down the body but pouring down *Brahma*, the Supreme Being : as if scrubbing and cooling the body with *Hari*, the God. Advancing in this manner he also got the eyes of Chaitanyadev—the absorbed eyes, the eyes of a "possessed" man. To him the Universe becoming Godful looked novel. The amount of help, obtainable from beholding such



a man before our mind's eye every now and then in our religious practices, cannot be had from any other object.

What is religion? Religion is not only wisdom, not only meditation, nor worship, nor work. Dr. Jabez T. Sunderland has said: Religion is a chain of experiences of human soul. What are the workings of religion on human life? There is one reply to this question, namely, it seasons human life with different flavours of ever new experiences; it renders life prosperous; it enriches it. *Keshub Chunder has taught us what amount of flavour is there in our religion.*

Science tells us, long long ago the roses were single-petaled, that is, they had a single row of petals. By and by man by cultivation evolved them into roses of Busra. How many rows of petals there are in those!—what beautiful colours!—what fragrance! In the early period of Brahmo Somaj there was only gravity invoking adoration and glorification of God. That worship of the Brahmo Somaj was like a "single-petaled" rose. Keshub Chunder, as it were, cultured it into a Busra rose. Now in our devotions that we offer to God there are rows after rows of so many sentiments, so many varied relationships with Him. What flavour in this devotion now! *Keshub Chunder showed us in how many ways we can love God, nay, what can we not indulge in with Him.* Not only the adoration of God, but we can hear the Voice of God; having seen Him as the Commander of the Army we can obey His Orders; we can carry on our domestic affairs with

Him, walk with Him, cook with Him, play with Him, recreate with Him, joke with him, enthuse with Him, madden with Him.

Many years ago Chaitanyadev talked in this strain. In the nectarous conversation which he held with Rai Ramananda we find the timeworn, emaciated ideals could not give him satisfaction. "The Act of gratifying God" (*debatar santosh bidhan*),—with the ideal he could not be satisfied. Such a deep, broad ideal as "Requiteless Service" (*nishkam dharma*)—even this failed to give him satisfaction. He found satisfaction in much flavoured *bhakti*, devotion wherein is commingled tranquillity (*shanta*), servitude (*dasya*), companionship (*sakhya*), fond affection (*batsalya*), and beatitude (*modhur*). Our brothers of the New Dispensation (Navavidhan) sing a very sweet hymn—many a time I too derive immense joy by singing it—therein we have

When shall I go to that City Sweet

How far, how far, O, how far is it?—

When harmonized "tranquillity," company, servitude,

Dwell with "fond affection" and blessed "beatitude."

How many variegated colours are there within a white light, that a prism unfolds. In regard to *bhakti*, devotion, the devotee-heart acts like a prism. How many colours there are inside devotion, the transparent heart of the foremost of devotees, Minister Keshub Chunder reveals to us. That is why in the tongues of *Bhaktas* every day new names of God find

birth. Keshub Chunder has called God, "Smiling Mother";—called Him, "Fair-complexioned," "Soul-Charmer";—after the style of Hafiz called Him "Heart-Plunderer";—seeing many colours blended in a corn-field he called God a "Dandy". Such sweet names of God are still in vogue among the spiritual culturists of his bent of mind.

It is not only the love or devotion to God that is associated with many flavours and sentiments. Human love is also the same. George Elliot has said in his novel "Adam Bede." In the love that is kindled in the heart of every strong man for his beloved lies latent an element of sentiment akin to mother's love; he like a mother becomes anxious to shield his beloved from all calamities. The statement looks curious, nevertheless it is very true. The more the human love becomes lofty, the more it becomes many flavoured.

Leaving aside human love or devotion, if we contemplate upon God's Infinite aspect, we find we gain much sweet experience of this attribute from the *sadhan* of the Chief of *Bhaktas*, Acharya Keshub Chunder. In what respect God is Infinite? Is it only in respect of space and time? Is it only in His creation; in His power; in His majesty and splendour? No, not only that. This type of conception of Infinity holds before mind a picture of hackneyed immensity; it cannot carry any chequered feeling. This mathematical infinitude can, no doubt, give a little satisfaction to intellect, but cannot satisfy the heart. The predominant taste of God's Infiniteness lies in His multifarious workings

(*leela*), particularly in His various sweet dealings with His devotees. By adding the endless taste or flavour to the aspect of Eternity in the Adoration of God, Keshub Chunder has imparted to our worship a blissful current of emotions.

*Not only in respect of relationship between God and man, but also in respect of our hearts' attitude towards saints and sages Acharya Keshub Chunder has introduced for us an unprecedented taste.* Regarding our mental attitude towards saints and sages there gradually unfold four inward stages. *Firstly*, because they are alien or belonging to another age we will not turn our back on them—this tolerant attitude we have to learn and cultivate first. That Keshub Chunder did teach us this lesson I have already mentioned at the outset. *Secondly*, if we further go inward we reach the stage of historical researching,—the desperate attitude of mind to discover truth about saints. *Thirdly*, the something which is essential for man in pursuit of spiritual culture or *sadhan*, and that “something” is reverential profession of discipleship. As a result of such reverential profession of discipleship we draw inspiration from the lives and words of *bhakta*, the devout souls during our religious *sadhan* exercises. *Fourthly*, there is a still further deeper stage To know of some man or to study his precepts, and *to be introduced* to him—these are not one and the same thing. The heart of the agitated religious *sadhak* becomes solicitous : in how many days shall I have a personal intimacy ; in how many days will it come to

pass that calling upon him I shall be able to tell him all my mind ; I shall be able to hear his hopeful, encouraging and endearing messages ; I shall see him eye to eye ; I shall exchange my heart's communication ; I shall be a man of his kindred group.

Unless we attain this (fourth) stage we cannot reap the good fruit of companionship with the Bhakta. In my youth when I was acutely smarting and weighed down in the grapple with life's many struggles I endeavoured to feel that Jesus was calling me, that his very sweet message of " Come unto Me, ye that are heavy laden " \* \* \* was meant for me. Out of such feeling I used to derive ample comfort.

But in the Brahmo Somaj many there are who cannot understand the formation of such a fellowship (*yoga*) with *Bhaktas*. Hearing about the aforesaid feeling in my youth, one of my elders said to me : " why did you not become a Christian then ? " How strange ! Am I installing Jesus on the seat of God ? No, not that. But in spite of knowing him to be a man, until and unless an intimacy to such an extent were formed with him, the probable things that I was to receive from him,—a good bit of its share would have fallen short. It is in this sense that Acharya Keshub Chunder added to the spiritual *sadhan* or culture a new and blessed program of " Pilgrimage to Saints ", *Sadhu Samagam*.

Inspired with such a feeling of Minister Keshub Chunder, Trailokyanath Sanyal (the Singing Apostle of Navavidhan) has written in one of his hymns :

"clasping the feet shall I beg for their (*Bhaktas*) love—," which means *Bhaktas* may include me also in the circle of their loveables ; may accept me also as their incorporated being—that is the longing of the heart. Unless we associate in this manner the deeper thirst of our soul is not quenched.

—*Navavidhan, April 16, 1936.*

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# REMINISCENSES OF KESHUB CHUNDER SEN\*

By RAI BAHADUR SHAMACHARAN ROY OF DACCA.

At this juncture (1865) the late Babu (afterwards Rai Bahadur) Kaliprasanna Ghosh came to Dacca in quest of service, and began to deliver lectures in English on Brahmoism. But the Christian missionaries who attended these lectures could not brook this, and Rev. Mr. Allan, an American Missionary, used to interrupt him very often in course of his lectures and tried to deprecate him by saying that his English was bad and that he had no knowledge of Philosophy and History. This continued for more than a month and the conduct of Mr. Allan gave great offence to the Brahmo Community. It also gave an impetus to our discussions with Kumud Bandhu (Babu Kumud Bandhu Bose, Retired Inspector of Schools) who always supported Mr. Allan.

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\* From the Presidential Address delivered at Curzon Hall, Dacca, in connection with the Second Annual Gathering of Dacca College and Dacca Hall Old Boys' Association on March 24, 1928. Reprinted from the East Bengal Times, April 28 and May 5, 1928.

## KESHUB CHUNDER AT DACCA

It was the general opinion among us all that unless Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen came to Dacca, it was in no way possible to check Mr. Allan and his followers. So, an earnest appeal was made to Keshub Chunder Sen to come to Dacca, and he promised that he would come. At the time of which I am speaking, a steamer used to ply once a week from Calcutta or Kusthia to Dacca, and as Keshub Chunder Sen was expected every steamer-day, we used to flock to the steamer-*ghat* at Badamtoli. But for a month or so, we had to return disappointed and Mr. Allan continued his vituperative attacks on Kaliprasanna Ghosh during his lectures. At last information was definitely received in Dacca that by the next steamer Keshub Chunder Sen was certain to come and to the great joy of us all, he did come and he was enthusiastically received and escorted from the steamer *ghat* to the house of the late Babu Braja Sundar Mitra. A large crowd followed him, and immediately after his arrival, Mr. Aratoon, the then Headmaster of the Normal School, a follower of the Rev. Mr. Allan, circulated a notice that he (Mr. Aratoon) would deliver a lecture at Rai Mohan Babu's *Natmandir*.

In the notice it was also stated that Keshub Chunder Sen had been invited to attend the meeting. The name of Keshub Chunder Sen drew a pretty large crowd to the meeting. It was to commence at 6 p.m. but as Keshub Chunder Sen did not arrive at the meeting at the appointed time, Mr. Aratoon waited for his

arrival. At last Keshub Chunder Sen came, and without uttering a word, occupied the first chair in the front row. In this connection I have to tell you that at the time it was the custom at Dacca that at public meetings all the chairs used to be occupied by Europeans and Armenians, while, with the exception of our revered Law Lecturer, the late Babu Upendra Nath Mitra, Government Pleader, not a single Bengalee gentleman, official or non-official, ever occupied any chair. But when Keshub Chunder Sen occupied the first chair, it filled us all with very great delight to see that there was such a man among us as could without taking any notice of Europeans or Armenians occupy, as of right, the foremost seat. I hope that custom no longer exists at Dacca.

### HOW THE GREAT REFORMER WAS RECEIVED.

Ladies and gentlemen, with your permission I would take the liberty to give you some of my reminiscence, of the lectures of Keshub Chunder Sen, at whose advent a great wave of enthusiasm spread over the town of Dacca. It was announced that he would deliver four lectures in English and two in Bengali.

### AUDIENCE ELECTRIFIED.

The first English lecture was on "Faith." The lecture was to commence at 6 p.m. but from 4 o'clock large crowds began to flock at the big *Natmandir* of Raimohan Babu and even outside. The *Mandap* was filled with a huge concourse of European and Armenian ladies and almost all the European and Armenian



gentlemen of the station were present. Even Mr. Brennand (Principal, Dacca College), who seldom attended any meeting, was in evidence before the meeting commenced. The Rev. Mr. Allan was also there with paper and pencil to take down the lecture in shorthand. At the appointed hour, Keshub Chunder Sen, like a prince arrived in a phaeton of the late Nawab Sir Khaja Abdul Gunni of Dacca and took his seat on the pulpit. For 5 or 6 minutes he remained sitting in the chair, as if to survey the audience. Then he rose and began his lecture. For a few minutes it appeared that the lecture was not quite enlivening and almost in a tone of despondency. I said to a friend of mine, the late Babu Harkumar Ghose, that probably he had been unnerved at the sight of such a big European audience. But soon after, the lecture began to move like a storm evoking enthusiastic applauses and spontaneous cheers from all quarters and the Scotch gentlemen present were seen rising up and waving their hats at times. The whole audience seemed to have been literally electrified. Mr. Allan was taking shorthand notes and I said to my friend Kumud Bandhu who sat by me, "How is it that to-day Mr. Allan is not rising to interrupt the lecturer?" Kumud Bandhu replied, "Why should he interrupt such a lecture?" It was a pity that amongst us there was not a shorthand writer. Consequently none of his Dacca lectures could be reported and published. But I can give you some idea of his lecture on "Faith," by telling you that it was as inspiring and edifying as his

lecture on "Regenerating Faith" delivered at the Town Hall in Calcutta.\*

The gathering at all the other three lectures was equally large and the lectures, which were on "Love", "Sacrifice" and "Intuition" were as eloquent and impressive as the first one.

### COUNTERED BY MR. ALLAN.

In the last lecture, namely that on "Intuition," Keshub Chunder Sen, addressing the Christian missionaries said: "Before you attack the theory of Intuition, first learn the philosophy of intuition" and boldly challenged them saying "If any one can prove that Intuition is derived, I shall forego Brahmoism."

Two or three days after this lecture, the Rev. Mr. Allan delivered a written counter lecture against Keshub's doctrine of Intuition. At its commencement he paid high tribute to Keshub Chunder Sen and said that he had no objection to his first three lectures which commanded the respect of them all, but that he could not speak in the same terms with regard to the last. He came with several books and read extracts from them in support of his theory and at times he was saying "I remind my friend of his promise that he would forego Brahmoism" if the fallacy of his doctrine could be exposed.

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\*This sermon-address was not delivered at the Town Hall but at Babu Gopal Lal Mullick's house, Jorasanko, Calcutta.

## A CRUSHING REPLY

After this lecture, at the earnest request of us all, Keshub Chunder Sen delivered another lecture, about it for many days afterwards. It was a crushing reply to the arguments and theories advanced by Mr. Allan. In this lecture he said more than once in reply to what Mr. Allan had said "I still reiterate my promise to forego Brahmoism etc." and he asked the Christian missionaries to study the philosophy of Victor Cousin which would remove erroneous ideas about intuition.

## EFFECT ON PUBLIC MIND

He also delivered two lectures in Bengal in the same *Natmandir*. He had never before delivered any public lecture in Bengali, though he used to deliver Bengali sermons in the Brahmo Mandir. Still these two lectures were as forceful and uplifting as the English ones. At the first Bengali lecture when he exhorted the audience by holding up the example of Chaitanya, Kamaldas Babaji alias Lakridas Babaji fell prostrate on the ground in a spell of unspeakable emotion. The late Barada Kinkar Roy and Lakshmi Munshi, who were the leaders of the bar and of the Hindu community, as also our College Pandit S. J. Srinath, were mightily charmed by his speech. At this time the hostility of the Hindus to the Brahmo Somaj was quite as great as that of the Christian missionaries. If any Brahmo happened to go to any orthodox Hindu's house and take his seat on the *Farash*, the water of any *Hukkah* that might be there would be polluted and was

thrown away. But the whole Hindu community at Dacca seemed to have been so much enamoured of Keshub Chunder Sen's address that Barada Kinkar Roy and Lakshmi Munshi actually invited him to their houses and entertained him with refreshments. One day I asked our Pandit Mahasay,—what he thought of Keshub Chunder Sen. He replied that Keshub was a *Rishi* and that what Keshub spoke was in agreement with the Hindu *Sastras*, but that the Dacca Brahmos were merely fowl-eaters.

#### ADMIRER BY EUROPEANS

The European community also was equally enthusiastic in their admiration for the great man. Even Mr. Brennand, usually indifferent to all worldly affairs, not only granted holiday to the College and the School in honour of Keshub Chunder Sen's visit to the College, but also took him to his house and entertained him there, though Mr. Brennand did none of these things even when Lord Napier of Magdala had visited the College. Mr. Bellet, too, after having heard his lecture, once remarked, "There are few even among us, who can speak so well." On a certain occasion while reading the essay on "Great Men" from the Spectator to us, he enquired if we could give an example that would satisfy the definition. Certain Zamindars were named by way of a reply. But Mr. Bellet observed that they were rich indeed but not quite great. When, however, Keshub was named as an example, he accepted the answer as correct and pointed out that Keshub was great because though he had left Dacca, "the eyes

of the multitude were turned on him"—in the sense that they had not ceased to think of him. At various meetings of the Dacca Institute, European gentlemen spoke of Keshub Sen very respectfully and admiringly.

### KESHUB CHUNDER AGAIN

After passing the First Arts Examination I also got myself admitted into the Law Class. There being only one Law-examination, we used simply to attend the class for securing the prescribed percentage of attendance and we never read a line of Law or listened to the lectures in the class. At this time, while we were in the B.A. class, Keshub Chunder Sen came for the second time to Dacca, and, it is needless to say, he was as enthusiastically received as he was before. This time he delivered only one public lecture at the Nawab's house. So tremendous was the uproar that it was feared that it would be impossible for Keshub Chunder Sen to deliver the lecture. However as soon as he rose and uttered the words, "Friends and Fellow-countrymen," pin-drop silence at once prevailed. The lecture was on "Brahmoism." It was as eloquent as the lectures I had the privilege of hearing before. We were taking down the lecture, but after a few minutes we found it an impossible task, and at last gave it up. The lecture was simply thrilling, and though over fifty years have elapsed since then, I still remember some passages of the lecture which made a deep impression. Keshub Chunder Sen had a high regard for Dr. Duff and in referring to him he said, "Dr. Duff,

the prince of missionaries, than whom a greater man did not visit India, declared, on the eve of his departure for Europe, in terms most emphatic and un-ambiguous, that Brahmoism was a power."

### INDIAN DEMOSTHENES

In another part, I remember, he said in reference to Miss Cobbe, "By some happy coincidence, I have this day received a letter from a lady in England,—the same feelings that actuate us here throb in a distant sister." And he paid a high tribute to the people of East Bengal of whom he said, "What was Scotland to England, so is East Bengal to West Bengal." He further said, "Last time few people ventured to dine with me, but this time about thirty gentlemen came forward to dine with me." Keshub Chunder Sen had with him at the time several letters which he had received from England, earnestly requesting him to visit that country. I read them with very great interest. In one he was addressed as the "Indian Demosthenes," in another he was curiously styled as "the professor of Philosophy, Presidency College;" and so on.

—*Navavidhan, April 23, 1936.*

### KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

*(This article was written for insertion on January 8, the anniversary of Keshub Chunder Sen's death, but the delay could not be helped due to pressure on space.—Ed. L.)*

Keshub Chunder Sen had a mission for his age and his people; indeed that mission is for all ages and

for all peoples. Keshub Chunder showed in his life that the different spiritual ideals, as illustrated in the lives of the world's Prophets, are only different phases of a harmonious whole, which go to perfect humanity. Thus he laid axe at the very root of sectarianism, and paved the way for universal brotherhood. The study of the life of this apostle of harmony is a perennial source of joy and blessedness.

Keshub Chunder Sen was born at a time when English education had unhinged the faith of the educated young men of Bengal in the traditional religion, and there was nothing to take its place. As a rule education, except in rare instances, neither stimulated the intellect to originality, nor influenced the heart to profound impulse. There was no enthusiasm for public life.

Keshub was born in 1838 in Calcutta. His grandfather, the great Ramcamal Sen, was well known in Bengal. A man of brilliant intellect and honest character he rose from the humble position of a type-setter in the Asiatic Society's press on a monthly pay of Rs. 8 to the secretaryship of the society and thence to the Dewanship of the Bank of Bengal with an income of Rs. 2,000 a month. Keshub was brought up in an opulent family. He was remarkable for his intelligence as a boy and made rapid progress in his studies. Purity of character was stamped on him from the dawn of his life, and he was a born leader of men.

At about the age of 18 a strange melancholy overtook him, which cast its shadow upon his face. It is a

common phenomenon in the lives of great spiritual characters that the beginning of their religious life is marked by an isolation, an effort to detach themselves from their immediate surroundings, and to live a life of constant introspection. This is indeed an attempt to make the mind free from worldly attachment and carnality, afterwards to be re-united with all on the higher plane of pure unselfish love.

Keshub began his spiritual life with prayer to God. In his beautiful biographical sketch Keshub says : "The first lesson of the scriptures on my life is prayer. No one helped me then ; and I had not entered any religious society... In that morning of spiritual life, the voice always sounded in my ears, Pray ! Pray ! There is no other way than prayer.....I offered one prayer in the morning, and one in the evening, both of which I had written out. All that was dark before, began to clear up, objects around were distinctly seen and by the practice of prayer I gained an endless, resistless strength, the strength of a lion." Mr. Mozoomdar, Keshub's biographer, observes, 'Here then is a reality of religious life that cannot be put away. Here is the example of a man, who from the small beginnings of a simple natural prayerfulness, gradually found in himself the growth of a spiritual life, whose magnitude has overshadowed the whole land, if not the whole world.'

Keshub joined the Brahmo Samaj in 1857, the principles of which he found 'corresponded exactly with the inner conviction of my heart, the voice of God in the soul' Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore was the



leader and the guiding spirit of the Samaj at the time. He was very pleased to have Keshub, a member of the well known Sen family, with him. The union of these two great men became the source of progress and diverse activities in the Samaj. Educational institutions were founded. Devendra Nath and Keshub gave theological and philosophical lectures which set forth clearly the doctrines of the theistic church. The lectures did an important work, namely, 'it created a nucleus of well trained men whose sympathy, devotedness and active co-operation made all future progress in the Brahmo Samaj possible.' Keshub worked for a short time in the Bank of Bengal where his progress was rapid. He resigned his post there in 1861, and gave up all secular work to devote himself wholly to his God-appointed work. This was a new departure in the Brahmo Samaj. Others followed him, and the Samaj got a devoted band of workers whose apostolic way of living made it possible for its principles to be preached not only all over India but in western countries also.

### MINISTER OF BRAHMO SAMAJ.

In 1862 Keshub was installed as minister of the Brahmo Samaj by Devendra Nath. The appointment was regarded by the former 'as most sacred and divinely given,' to which he faithfully clung all his life. As minister and nothing higher he always wished to be recognized by the whole Indian theistic community, taking upon himself spiritual responsibilities, and heavy cease-

less work, the burden of which, to the last days of his eventful life he bore under every circumstance of trial and difficulty.'

Not long after this event signs of disagreement manifested themselves between Devendra Nath and Keshub. The latter wished to reconstruct society on a new basis, do away with the caste system and institute inter-caste and widow marriage. His spirit yearned for endless progress, as the spirit of God directed him. Devendra Nath was conservative, his idea of the Brahmo Samaj was only a reformed Hindu society, with the revived spirituality of the Upanishads. Keshub and his young associates severed their connection with the Adi Brahmo Samaj, of which Devendra Nath was the head, and founded the Brahmo Samaj of India in 1866. Keshub signalised his independent career by a spiritual progress and missionary activity which raised the Brahmo Samaj to its present position.

Keshub went to England in 1870 whither his fame had already spread. The history of the enthusiastic welcome that he received there and the hospitality and friendship extended to him from the poorest peasant to her Majesty Queen Victoria forms fascinating reading.

### MARRIAGE ACT.

Keshub's crowning act in the line of social reform was the passing of the Reformed Marriage Act. Referring to this Act, Mr. Mazoomdar writes : ' This law is known in India as Act III of 1872. It does away with idolatrous rites in marriages, which is a great

blow to orthodox Hinduism. It legalizes marriages between different castes and thereby undermines that institution. It sanctions the remarriage of Hindu widows. It makes early marriages impossible by fixing the minimum limit of age. It introduces for the first time the modern institution of civil marriage into Hindu society, and besides these, it confers other indirect advantages. These indicate the line of reforms in which the Brahmo Samaj has been generally engaged.'

From the very beginning Keshub's religious life developed in a way all its own. It was based on the communion with the Supreme Spirit which he thought was the birthright of every man. As it grew his spirituality assumed two aspects, namely, national and universal. To firm faith, stoic rigidity, and moral purity was added devotional emotion, as he threw himself more and more into Divine Bosom in the midst of many worldly trials and spiritual isolation. With the deepening of his devotional fervour he entered deeper and deeper into the unmeasured depths of our national spiritual life, and the hidden meanings of the teachings of the great Rishis and sages, as recorded in the national scriptures were revealed in their imperishable glory.

#### INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

Since the establishment of British rule in India the influence of the Christ has been spreading in the country. Keshub could not escape its influence. Even at an young age he developed a personal relation with Christ. But he struck out for himself a sentiment of

his own. He says : ' Was not Jesus an Asiatic ? I rejoice, yea, I am proud—that I am Asiatic. In fact, Christianity was founded and developed by Asiatics in Asia. When I reflect on this, my love for Jesus becomes a hundredfold intensified. I feel him nearer my heart, and deeper in my national sympathies.' The subsequent maturity of Keshub's spiritual genius was the full-flowering of the faith, love, asceticism and devotion of his oriental nature and thus akin to Christ character. His memorable addresses at the historic town hall of Calcutta, are testimonies to his appreciations of Christ life and growth in Christ ideal. He emphasised on the *spirit* of Christ-life but had no faith in all the doctrines of evangelic Christianity. He would not place any one in the place of God, nor make any one equal to the Supreme Being. In this principle he was always uncompromising. He was loyal to all the prophets and enjoined it on his followers.

A few months before his death Keshub went to the Simla hills on the advice of his doctors. He had gone there with other purposes than the restoration of his health. Keshub long felt the need of laying down definite laws for the guidance of the daily life and social functions of the Aryans of the new dispensation. Nothing is so sublime and beautiful in creation than the well regulated pure life of a devout soul, breathing faith in God, and love of God and man. The book is named the *New Samhita*, which is unique of its kind and characterised by a lofty ideal of a life of peace and harmony embodying the spirit of the new faith in its

application to social life. It contains the essence of God's moral law adapted to the peculiar needs and structure of reformed Hindus and based upon their national instincts and traditions.' On the Himalayan heights he wrote another book 'Yoga, subjective and objective,' 'the most original and thoughtful perhaps of all his writings,' as Mr. Mazoomdar writes. Those who wish to know the true meaning and real significance of the Yoga vision, as gained by the Aryan Rishis, which forms the basis of the whole Hindu spiritual life, cannot do better than read this book.

Keshub Chunder Sen passed away on January 8, 1884. His death caused grief all over India. It forms an epoch in the history of India showing the essential unity of her people. Blessed be his memory, who stands in the front rank of the great religious leaders of mankind.

SURESH CHUNDER BOSE.

—*The Leader*, January 17, 1935.

### KESHUB DEATH ANNIVERSARY

High tribute to the life and teachings of Keshub Chunder Sen, the Bengali social and religious reformer, who died half-a-century ago, was paid by the Hon. Raja Sir Manmatha Nath Roy Chowdhury of Santosh who presided at the meeting held in the Albert Hall, Calcutta, last night to commemorate the anniversary of the death of the founder of the Nababidhan Brahmo Samaj.

"If India is ever to be great and if our people are ever to march abreast with the progressive nations of

the world," said the Hon. Raja, "our people must maintain as much real contact with our mighty dead as with those who are considered in the material sense as living forces. I firmly believe that the problem of religion to the holy spirit of Keshub Chunder Sen was the problem of our national existence. He felt, as no other man had felt before, that faith and truth constitute the panacea for all the ills from which our self-forgotten nation has been suffering so long. His temple of worship was a nursery of honour and principle. He considered integrity of character and social sympathy to be indispensable if his people were to become great, and the mission of his life was to strive and strive hard to provide the strongest possible foundation of national character."

Concluding, the president said :—

"The sweetness and geniality of Keshub Chunder's nature, the purity of his character, the saintliness of his soul, his life-inspiring words, his supernatural eloquence and his wonderful spiritual achievements, I have no manner of doubt, shall continue to cheer us, comfort us, as we go on fighting the battles of life. His life which inaugurated a new era in the spiritual and intellectual history of India is a guarantee that Providence has yet a great destiny in store for our motherland. It stands to reason that the country which produced such an epoch-making man may well look forward hopefully to the future."

Rev. Miss Margaret Barr, speaking as a representative of English Unitarians, said that it was through

the help of the Unitarians that Keshub Chunder, when in England, sent forth his message to the British people.

Mr. Hemendra Prasad Ghose, Mr. A. Iqbal and Professor Mahalanobis were among others who addressed the meeting.

—*Statesman* (Dak Edition)

*Wednesday, January 9, 1935.*

LATE MR. SATYENDRA NATH TAGORE'S INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE AUTO-BIOGRAPHY OF MAHARSHI DEVENDRA NATH TAGORE.

Ever since embracing the Brahmic faith, my father had travelled a good deal. He made it a rule to set out on tour every year when the Durga Puja festival came round, with a view to keep himself aloof from the idolatrous ceremonies which were still adhered to and practised in his domestic circle, and which he had no power to abolish. In this way he travelled over various parts of India. Leaving out of account the innumerable places he visited in Bengal, the names of Lahore, Multan, Amritsar and Rangoon may be mentioned among the various places to which he went, preaching and proclaiming the Brahmo religion, and establishing Samajes, where practicable. In 1856 he for the first time set foot on the Himalayas, and there he heard the call which was to definitely determine his future course. He spent a year and a half among the mountains in the vicinity of the Simla Hills, absorbed

in intense study and contemplation, and returned to Calcutta shortly after the Sepoy Mutiny, a regenerated Soul, full of ardour and enthusiasm to propagate the holy religion he had embraced. It was then that he poured forth his inspired utterances in a series of sermons, delivered extempore from the pulpit, which made a most profound impression upon the congregation. The sermons were taken down in writing by myself and others, and eventually published in a book entitled *The Brahma Dharma Vyakhyan*, or "Exposition of the Brahma Dharma."\*

The autobiography breaks off at the time when my father resumed his work in the Brahma Samaj, on his return from the Himalayas. Indeed, the last chapter takes us little beyond the threshold of his career as a religious reformer. The early fifties were not an eventful period either in my father's life, or in the history of the Brahma Samaj. They were devoted to the work of quiet construction and consolidation. The second period may be said to commence with the year 1859, shortly after my father's return from Simla, when an event occurred which was destined to work a great revolution in the Samaj. This was the coming of Keshab Chandra Sen into the ranks of the Brahmo brotherhood. The immediate cause of Keshab's acquaintance with my father was his anxiety to take the Maharshi's advice as to the propriety of taking the mantra from his family Guru in accordance with the time-honoured custom of his forefathers. I remember very well taking him to my father, and the question



proposed was,—would he be justified in conforming to that custom? This question, after some discussion, was decided in the negative. This and subsequent acts of nonconformity on the part of Keshab, led to a serious rupture between him and the elders of his family. Matters came to such a pass that Keshab and his wife were compelled to leave their home and take shelter in our family-house for some time (1862).

My father was much struck by the earnestness and ability of young Keshab, and at once accepted him as a friend and coadjutor. A deep and abiding attachment sprang up between them. "The mature man of fifty joined himself to the eager youth of twenty-three, and they both agreed to work with a cheerfulness and enthusiasm which none had experienced before." Thenceforth they jointly began to plan and adopt several important measures for the improvement of the Samaj, the most noteworthy being the establishing of the Brahma Vidyalaya, a theological Institute where both of them gave lectures on religious subjects in Bengali and English. In 1862, my father installed Keshab as Acharya of the Samaj, and conferred on him the title of Brahmananda. From that time my father was known as the Pradhan Acharya (Chief Minister) of the Samaj.

But this harmony was not to last. The temperaments of the two men differed too widely to allow of a permanent co-operation. My father, though an uncompromising enemy of idolatrous worship, was essentially conservative in his instincts. While endeavouring to

revive the lofty Theism of the Upanishads, he was not prepared for measures calculated, as it seemed, to subvert the social fabric of modern Hinduism. He cherished an ideal differing greatly from that of the bulk of the educated young men of his day. To him ancient India was the cradle of all that was pure in morals and religion. He was a man more deeply imbued than any one in modern times, with the genuine spirit of the ancient Rishis. It is singular that the one field of religious inspiration which was foreign to him was the Hebrew Scriptures. He was never known to quote the Bible, nor do we find any allusion to Christ or his teachings in his sermons. For him the Indian Scriptures sufficed. His religion was Indian in origin and expression, it was Indian in ideas and in spirit. The late Rev. Protap Chandra Mozumdar wrote in a recent article, "To the most straitlaced Evangelist the Protestant Bible had no greater authority and inspiration than the Upanishads had for Maharshi Devendranath. It nourished and deepened every faculty in him." The Brahman of Upanishads was the God of his worship, and it was from Brahman that the Samaj derived its name. The direct communion of the human soul with the Supreme Spirit was the most salient point of his teachings. No Gurus or Prophets stand between our soul and our God. We see him face to face, and hear His voice in the innermost depths of our conscience. The Divinity of Jesus Christ, Christ the only Mediator and Saviour of mankind, such doctrines were repugnant to his austere Monotheism. As regards social reforma-

tion, he was for adopting a slow and cautious policy, a policy of conciliation ; he was in favour of leaving such reforms as were really required to the influence of time, and to the effect of the teachings of a pure religion. Keshab, on the other hand, was a reformer of a more pronounced type. Though for many years he had sat at the feet of the Maharshi, a time came when he could no longer pull on with his conservatism. Intermarriage, remarriage of widows, abolition of caste distinctions, all these questions of radical reform were started and discussed. On these questions, it would seem, my father yielded as far as his conservatism would permit, but when he thought that Keshab's disciples were going too far, he drew back in alarm. Then, again, there were other differences between the two. My father, as I have said, was intensely national in his religious ideal, whereas Keshab's outlook was more cosmopolitan. While national in some respects, he was better fitted by his training and education to assimilate the ideas and civilization of the West. Indeed, his whole character was moulded by Western culture and Christian influences. He drew much of his spiritual store from the New Testament, and habitually spoke on Jesus Christ in a manner which made his missionary friends cling to a hope for his conversion to their faith. In "Jesus Christ, Europe and Asia," a lecture delivered in April 1865, Keshab says :

" I cherish the profoundest reverence for the character of Jesus, and the lofty ideal of moral truth which he taught and lived." " In Christ we see not only the

exaltedness of humanity, but also the grandeur of which Asiatic nature is susceptible. To us Asiatics, therefore, Christ is doubly interesting, and his religion is entitled to our peculiar regard. And thus in Christ, Europe and Asia, the East and the West, may learn to find harmony and unity."

These utterances, though of a date subsequent to the separation, are sufficient to show his attitude towards Christianity, in marked contrast to my father's. A struggle between two such temperaments and such opposite ideals, was bound to end in disruption, and matters soon came to a crisis.

The immediate cause of the rupture is generally believed to have been the objection raised by Keshab to the wearing of the sacred thread by those who conducted Divine Service in the Brahma Samaj. At first my father was inclined to give in, and even went so far as actually to set up two of Keshab's friends, who had discarded their Brahminical thread, as Acharyas, in the place of the old Ministers who had refused to comply with the proposed reform. But on second thoughts, reflecting perhaps on what was due to the old ministers who had suffered so much for the Samaj, and being desirous of retaining and harmonizing the conservative and progressive elements in the Samaj, he changed his mind, and the old thread-bearing Brahmos were replaced as Ministers.

The rupture between the two parties was further widened by an intermarriage between two persons of different castes, solemnized by Keshab in 1863; this

was a reform of a radical character which my father was not prepared to adopt, in opposition to the sentiments of the entire Hindu community. For sometime proposals for separate services in the same Church were discussed, but with no result. A complete severance seemed to be the only solution. Some of the young men broke away, but Keshab held on for sometime longer. The mutual love between the Pradhan Acharya and Brahmanand delayed the catastrophe. But as no compromise was possible between the two, separation was inevitable.

In February 1865, Keshab finally withdrew from the parent church; in the following year he sent a parting address to my father, and established the "Brahma Samaj of India." On the secession of Keshab's party, my father gave his own church the name of "Adi Brahma Samaj."

With this important phase in the history of the Samaj the Autobiography does not deal. It would no doubt have been of great interest had it extended to the close of the period, culminating in the schism just described, fully disclosing the causes that led to it, and laying bare the inner workings of my father's mind at the time of the occurrence. But though my father left it incomplete, the letters that passed between the two leaders at the time, and those that were exchanged at the subsequent attempts to heal up the differences between the two churches, throw a flood of light on the controversy. And these, I think, fully bear out my view of the situation as expressed above. My father's

work has throughout been constructive and not destructive. He was a builder-up, not a puller down. He was, I repeat, not in favour of any revolutionary measures of reform which might have the effect of permanently alienating the general body of his countrymen from the Brahma Samaj, and thus operate as a bar to the diffusion and acceptance of pure Monotheism in the country. The substitution of theistic worship for the prevailing idolatry, was to his mind a consummation more devoutly to be wished than mere change of social institution or usage. How strongly he felt this may be gathered from his writings.

In a paper called "My Twenty-five Years' experience of the Brahma Samaj" he says :—

"The practice of taking the Brahmic Covenant was instituted on the 7th Paush, Shaka 1765 (1843). On that day I took the covenant before Ramchandra Vidyavagish, the Acharya of the Samaj. From that time I used to travel out every year, when the Durga Puja was celebrated at my house. During my travels, how often have I prayed to my God with tears in my eyes for the day when idolatrous ceremonies would be abolished from our house, and the adoration of the Infinite commence in their stead."

Sometime after Keshab with his disciples had severed his connection with parent Samaj, he determined to convene a meeting for the purpose of considering the best means for cementing his party into a compact religious association. This meeting was held in November 1866, at the Metropolitan College house in Chitpur

Road. The meeting was numerously attended. It was opened by divine service which included some hymns, and the recital of Scriptural texts, extracted from the writings of Christians, Hindus, Mohammedans, Parsees and Chinese. This extraordinary innovation was introduced to show the universal and Catholic character of the proposed Church, as will appear from the resolutions that were unanimously carried at the meeting.

These are :—

1. That an Association be established under the title of " Brahmo Samaj of India."
2. That this Association be bound to preserve the purity and universality of its religion.
3. That people of both sexes, believing in the fundamental principles of Brahmoism, shall be admissible as members.
4. That mottos and maxims, agreeing with the principles of Brahmoism, be gleaned and published from the religious writings of all nations.
5. That a vote of thanks be given to Devendra Nath Tagore for his zeal and labour in promoting the progress of the religion.

On the 23rd January (11th Magh) 1868, the day on which the 38th annual festival of the Adi Brahma Samaj was celebrated the foundation-stone of the Brahma Samaj of India was laid, and the erection of the Brahma Mandir in Machua Bazar Street was completed in August 1869 ; since then the Samaj, founded by Keshab has met there. Thus, after a series of struggles which

it is needless to detail, Keshab's efforts towards consolidating and bringing together the seceding part in one body were crowned with success. But while working for his own Church with indefatigable zeal and unflinching devotion, Keshab, it is a pleasure to note, was nowise unmindful of the debt of gratitude he owed to the Adi Samaj, and was always anxious to establish a *modus vivendi* between the two Churches. He even drew up a scheme with that object, and submitted it to my father for his approval, but somehow, all his efforts in that direction fell through. Nevertheless, he continued to cherish the utmost reverence and regard for my father, and the latter treated him with paternal affection to the last. The schism in the Brahmo Samaj made no difference in their mutual friendly and cordial relations.

The foundation of the new Church of India gave an impetus to much missionary enterprise, and Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, one of the most devoted and prominent of Keshab's followers, was selected for mission work in Southern India, where, through his exertions, a Brahmo Samaj was established in the city of Madras. Later on, Protap Chandra carried the banner of Theism across the Atlantic, and made his influence felt chiefly amongst our Unitarian brethren in the West, and succeeded in enlisting their sympathies and co-operation in our cause. Keshab himself went about preaching the religion in Bombay and Northern India. Aghornath Gupta, another missionary, traversed with much difficulty the inaccessible forests of Assam, and preached with success among its rude and superstitious people.



Having established his Church on a firm footing, Keshab, I like the founder of the Brahmo Samaj, turned his thoughts towards the West, and in the beginning of 1870 set sail for England, where he was enthusiastically received. His stay in England was "a constant triumph." Her late Majesty Queen Victoria, knowing how great a power for good he wielded in India, graciously granted him a private audience, which left an indelible impression on his heart. His winning manners, persuasive eloquence, and brilliant intellectual attainments created a highly favourable impression on the British public, and he was afforded every opportunity of profiting by close personal intercourse with some of the most celebrated scholars and divines of England. He was, moreover, fortunate in the friendship and intimacy of that eminent Sanskrit scholar Professor Max Muller, who gives us an appreciative sketch of the life and work of Keshab in his Biographical Essays.

"On Keshab's return to India," says Miss Collet in her history of the Brahmo Samaj, "he immediately began to put in practice some of the hints he had gathered in England, and started what he called "The Indian Reform Association," a body of which the nucleus was taken from his own Church, but which was declared to be open to all classes, races and creeds, who would join to promote the social and moral reformation of the people of India." The Association was divided into five branches, viz. Female Improvement, Education, Cheap Literature, Temperance and Charity. The First section commenced by opening a Female Normal and

Adult school for ladies who wished to be instructed themselves, or to be trained for teaching others. The Normal School has long been closed, but Keshab's Victoria Institution for ladies, with a girl's school attached to it, after various vicissitudes, exists to the present day. It was at this time that Keshab and his followers established their Boarding House, called the Bharat Asram. Industrial schools, night schools, and other charitable experiments followed, but in the attempt to do so much at once, failure and disappointment were inevitable. The most important step in Keshab's career was the part taken by him in ascertaining from expert medical opinion the proper and minimum age for the marriage of girls, and legalizing Brahmo marriages by getting Act III of 1872 passed.

Keshab Chandra would now seem to have attained the summit of his ambition. His fondest expectations were realized. He had surrounded himself with a band of devoted followers, some of whom worshipped him as an Avatar with a blind unreasoning faith. Everything seemed to smile across his path, and a wide field of usefulness and reform lay open before him, when, all of a sudden, a black cloud showed itself on the horizon. This was the marriage of his daughter with the Maharaja of Kuchbehar. I do not propose to enter here upon the merits of the bitter controversy that ensued ; suffice it to say that a considerable body of his followers strongly disapproved of the step he had thought fit to take, and that his this marriage was the occasion of a further schism in the Samaj. On Thurs-

day, the 22nd March, 1878, a large meeting of the members of the Brahma Samaj of India was called at the Brahma Mandir, in which it was agreed that Babu Keshab Chandra Sen, the Minister of the Mandir, by countenancing the premature marriage of his daughter, and by allowing idolatrous rites to be observed in connection with that marriage, had violated the principles accepted by himself and the Brahma Samaj of India. It was therefore resolved that "he was not fit to continue in the office of the Minister." The outcome of the opposition was the formation of a third branch, known as the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. This section of the Samaj counts, among its members such distinguished men as Ananda Mohan Bose, K. G. Gupta, Pandit Shiva Nath Shastri, Dr. P. K. Roy, Sasipada Banerji and others.

The name "Sadharan" Samaj is significant, as showing that it claims to have advanced from a Church Government of a theocratic type to a Church Government on representative and democratic principles.

The last stage of Keshab's theological development is that represented by the formulation of the New Dispensation. In 1881, Keshab proclaimed this Dispensation, which, besides a number of rites and ceremonies adopted from our own and other systems of religion, emphasises the fundamental unity of all religions. Its creed, as propounded by its founder is shortly :—

The Harmony of all Scriptures and all Saints and all sects.

The Harmony of Reason and Faith, of devotion  
and duty, of Yoga and Bhakti.

The Church of the One Supreme. No idolatry.

The Church of Universal Brotherhood. No caste  
or sectarianism.

The following is an Extract from the Creed of the  
New Dispensation as set forth in the " Navasambhita " :—

" I accept and revere the Scriptures so far as they  
are records of the wisdom and devotion and piety of  
inspired geniuses, and the dealings of God's providence  
in the salvation of nations, of which records the spirit  
is of God's, but the letter man's.

" I accept and revere the world's prophets and  
saints, as far as they embody and reflect the different  
elements of divine character, and set forth the higher  
ideals of life for the instruction and sanctification of  
the world.

" My creed is the Science of God which enlighteneth  
all. My Gospel is the love of God which saveth all.  
My heaven is life in God which is accessible to all. My  
church is that invisible Kingdom of God, in which is  
all truth, all love, all holiness.

The schism in the Brahma Samaj is deplored by  
some as tending to weaken the cause of Theism in  
India, but it may be construed as a happy event in  
another light. Professor Max Muller takes a brighter  
and more hopeful view of the separation, as will  
appear from the following passage :—

" If we call the separation of the Brahma Samaj of  
India from the old Adi Brahma Samaj, and again the

separation of the Sadharan Samaj from the Brahma Samaj of India, a schism, we seem to condemn by the very word we use. But to my mind these three societies seem like three branches of the one vigorous tree, the tree that was planted by Ram Mohan Roy. In different ways they all serve the same purpose; they are all doing, I believe, unmixed good, in helping to realise the dream of a new religion for India, it may be for the whole world—a religion free from many corruptions of the past, call them idolatry, or caste, or verbal inspiration, or priestcraft,—and firmly founded on a belief in the one God, the same in the Vedas, the same in the Old, the same in the New Testament, the same in the Koran, the same also in the hearts of those who have no longer Vedas or Upanishads or any sacred Books whatever between themselves and their God. The stream is small as yet, but it is a living stream. It may vanish for a time, it may change its name and follow new paths of which as yet we have no idea. But if there is ever to be a new religion in India, it will, I believe, owe its very life-blood to the large heart of Ram Mohan Roy and his worthy disciples, Debendra Nath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen."

After Keshab's separation, my father practically retired from active work in the Samaj. He had trained up ministers to conduct the service of his own Adi Samaj, and appointed a Committee for the management of its affairs. He continued, however, to keep a close supervision over the affairs of the Samaj, and everything was done with his knowledge and under his advice

and guidance to the last. For himself he had now another call. That call was to withdraw himself from the din and bustle of the world, and spend his days in communion with his God. "It was to live before the world," as one has well said,—“in it and yet out of it, the life of a true Rishi, and pour forth over all who came into his presence the genial radiance of a man of God. Henceforth he became the common patriarch of all the Samajes, and a Maharshi for all Hindus.’

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**WHAT PROF. F. W. MAX MULLER TOLD REV. P. C. MAJUMDAR, WHEN THE PROFESSOR MET THE LATTER IN ENGLAND, IN 1883, ABOUT KESHUB AND HIS MOVEMENT—NAVAVIDHAN.**

“But no words of cheer,” writes Mr. Majumdar, “have been more cordial than that of Max Muller, our old well-trying friend. With the religion of the Brahmo Somaj he has very real and deep sympathy. His sympathies evidently comprehend all the three sections of the movement BUT HE UNDOUBTEDLY LOOKS UPON KESHUB AS THE TOWERING MODELLING PERSONALITY THAT WILL GIVE TO THE INSTITUTION ITS TRUE CHARACTER. ‘YOUR MOVEMENT (NAVAVIDHAN),’ says he, ‘NOW CANNOT PERISH. IT HAS MADE ITS NAME AND MARK, IT HAS FOUND ITS PLACE IN THE WORLD. You cannot possibly see the fruit of its works. It may languish for a time. BUT IT WILL GROW AGAIN. ITS SPIRIT IS THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE. ITS GROWTH IS THE WANT OF MANKIND. Labour earnestly, work hard, give to the world what you have to give. Look

*neither to the right nor to the left and pay no heed to what men say of you. Everything will be right in the end.\** You may have lost some of your old friends

\* N.B.—Navavidhan was proclaimed by Keshab in 1880. His idea of Harmony of Religions, of the Religion of the New Dispensation (Navavidhan) was then "most fiercely attacked BY THOSE WHO KNEW IT LEAST" as said by Mr. N. N. Ghose, F.L.S. (London) F.R.S.Z.

Pandit Shivanath Shastri, one of the critics, very severely and unjustly, and in certain places ungentlemanly attacked Keshub and his Navavidhan in his books (written while actuated by malice and hatred) viz. "The New Dispensation and the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj" and his so-called "History of the Brahmo Samaj," (A History which was most severely criticised by the Shastri's own favourite disciple, late Chandu Charan Banerji, in open letters addressed to the Shastri published in the *Jaistha* and *Bhadra* issues of the Bengali Monthly *Nabya Bharat* (নব্য ভারত) of 1319 (Bengali Year) and also in other books, pamphlets and papers. Similarly in the Sylhet Sadharan Samaj Appeal of 1881 besides abuses it was said that the "New Dispensation was not Brahmo Religion," that "Navavidhan was totally opposed to Brahmoism."

Later on, however, Pandit Shivanath Shastri in his Diary admitted that he put the Samaj (Sadharan) to a wrong track. He then tried to rectify his mistake and tried to follow to a great extent the ways and methods of Keshub which he once condemned. But it was too late (vide Shastri's Life by his daughter Srimati Hemlata).

Then again in his address in the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj Hall in January 1910 he inter alia said thus :—

"But Brahminanda Keshub Chandra studied Christian scriptures.....and realised Brahmo faith as a broad, spiritual, universal and mighty' religion and came forward to voice it forth. His lectures delivered on 'Jesus Christ, Europe and Asia,' "Great Men," and his book named "Sloka Sangraha" expressed that great idea. To be plain the broadness and universal spirit in the Brahmo faith

and your reception may not be brilliant—that does not matter—say what you are doing in India and what you mean to do. PEOPLE WILL LISTEN, WILL THINK ABOUT IT AND AFTER A TIME, YOU WILL SEE THAT THE SEEDS WILL SPRING UP."

—*From the Life of Protap Chandra Majumdar*  
by S. C. Bose, pp. 81-82.

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were the utmost ideas in his mind. They captured his mind and entered his aspirations and imbued his thoughts. *This is what in later times gave rise to the idea of unification of all religions* (সর্ব ধর্ম সমন্বয়) *in his Navavidhan. It is his principal work in the history of the Brahmo Samaj.* Time has not yet come to realise the depth and greatness of this contribution of his.

Even today the religions of this world breathe the ancient and communal animosities. The great work in which Brahmo religion is engaged cannot be seen yet but the day is approaching when it will be manifest. *Then the name Keshub Chandra Sen will shine as a bright star."*

—*Keshub Chandra and Ram Krishna*  
by G.C. Banerji, pp. 372 373.



**Chapter III (concluded)**  
**SIR SURENDRANATH BANERJI**  
**ON**  
**KESHAB AND HIS PLACE IN**  
**MODERN INDIA**

*(From his book "Nation in Making")*

It was Keshab Chunder Sen who first made use of the platform for public addresses and revealed the power of oratory over the Indian mind. In the early sixties and seventies of the last century the Brahmo Samaj movement was a potent and living force, which exercised a profound, though possibly an indirect, influence even over orthodox Hindu Society. Its immediate effect was to check the conversions to Christianity, that were then taking place. Those who were dissatisfied with the old faith and felt the stirrings of the new spirit created by the eloquence of the great Brahmo leader found comfort and consolation in the teachings of the new religion. Keshab Chunder Sen, originally a follower of Devendranath Tagore, had seceded from the Brahmoism as taught by the Maharshi. His was the open breach with the Hindu social system, which Devendranath Tagore, following the lead of the great Raja Ram Mohan Roy, sought to reform and adapt to the spirit of the Vedic teachings. Keshab Chunder Sen's addresses

created a deep and abiding impression on young minds. They drew large audiences. There was a visible religious awakening. His marvellous oratory, set forth with all the accessories of a sonorous voice, a noble diction and a commanding presence, and inspired by the fervour of a deep and burning conviction, fascinated his hearers. I was often at his meetings and listened with breathless attention and ever-increasing admiration.

Keshab Chander Sen had an eloquent coadjutor in Protap Chander Majumdar. The latter's oratory was of a different type. It was imaginative, picturesque, brimful of wit, but was wanting, compared with that of his great chief, in those resources which appeal to the heart and stir the feelings.

Keshab Chander Sen was a great organizer, a born leader of men with a penetrating insight into human nature. He was a religious teacher with all the asceticism of the Hindu Vaishnava ingrained in him by his family associations ; but he was also a man of affairs, understood the world and knew how to deal with the world. If he had not chosen to be religious leader, he might, if he had had the opportunities, have been a statesman, occupying a front rank among statesmen. His personality was charming, and in his society his followers found a pleasing companion and a great leader. The indirect effect of Keshab's teachings was great. It not only broadened and liberalized educated thought in matters social and religious, but it also produced an opposite effect, namely, it strengthened

the orthodoxy of the extreme reactionaries. They were alarmed; they retired within their shell and surrounded themselves with a hard incrustation of the most narrow and obsolete prejudices.

## TESTIMONIES TO KESHAB

(By G. P. MOZOOMDAR)

In 1875 when I went to Bankim Chandra's house at Kantalpara, I saw his father with grey hair sitting on a wooden *chowki*. The venerable man saw a copy of the *Sloksangraha* in my hand and began to talk to me about our minister Keshab Chander Sen. He said that in the midst of the people adopting western fashions and aping western manners, Keshab was a true *rishi*. Pandit Mathura Nath Tarkaratna of Nadia on one occasion told me that if Keshab had been born in Nadia he would have been the leader of even the orthodox classes. Pandit Kailash Ch. Shiromani, Professor of Hindu Logic in Benares College, said that Keshab's life was a great lesson in spiritual living into us, for it taught one how to follow God's guidance in the teeth of human opposition. The Rev. Baikunta Nath Dey, Principal of the Free Church Institution of Kalna, compared Keshab to the boy Casabianca of the "Burning Kent." The devout old Vaishnab Bhagwan Das Babaji of Kalna used to say that "Keshab Babu" was a *Vaishnab*. The great Moslem souls Syed Serajuddin Ahmad and Syed Sadaruddin Ahammad of Burdwan considered Keshab to be a "paigambar." The Hon'ble Kristodas Pal told me

that the purity of Keshab's life would always remain impressed in his heart.

—NAVAVIDHAN, *December 31, 1935.*

KESHUB CHUNDER SEN—APOSTLE OF  
PURITY, FREEDOM AND UNITY

*Address by SJ. BIPIN CHANDRA PAL.*

(November 19, 1924)

The following is the full text of the speech delivered by Mr. B. C. Pal at the birthday anniversary meeting of Keshub Chunder Sen at the Overtoun Hall on Wednesday last :—

“ I had the privilege, I will not say of personally knowing Keshub Chunder Sen, but I had the privilege of growing up in my early youth in the atmosphere which Keshub Chunder Sen created in Bengal. That is more important than even personal acquaintance or intimacy either, because great leaders of men are known through the atmosphere which they create around them in the country or society to which they belong than even by direct personal contact. It is necessary for the present generation who know not Keshub Chunder Sen to understand what that atmosphere was.

A generation has grown up in Bengal who, to quote the Old Testament, knew not Joseph. They do not know the conditions of 50 years ago and they seem to have the idea that the things they see around them

today have dropped like Manna from heaven. Nobody worked to create the present conditions ; they developed of themselves and we need not remember the past or pay our homage to the past for the things that we enjoy at the present day. Young Bengal was the first care of Keshub Chunder Sen and young Bengal today has practically forgotten Keshub Chunder Sen. That is one of the reasons which led me notwithstanding my present health conditions, to accept the kind invitation of my friends to come and take part in this day's celebrations.

### CONTEMPORARY BENGAL

Keshub Chunder Sen can be viewed from quite a variety of view-points. He was a religious teacher of a very high order. He was a moral teacher of a very high order. His contributions to the religious thought of Bengal and of India are very great. His contributions to the moral life of the country are equally great, if not even greater from some points of view. His contributions to Bengalee literature cannot be treated lightly. You hear of the Bengalee oratory today, but Keshub Chunder Sen was in a special sense the creator of modern Bengalee Oratory. He held a high place in Bengalee literature, and in the life and thought of Bengal of 40 years ago. But I will not try to take you through these various phases of the crowded life of Keshub Chunder Sen. I have been thinking since some days past of the great change that has come over Bengalee life and Bengalee thought and I frankly say that the examination has not been very encouraging.

There has been undoubtedly to my mind a distinct decadence in intellectual and moral life in our community. That strength, that vigour of mind, which characterised the men who surrounded Keshub Chunder Sen, that lofty idealism which inspired the lives of the men who belonged to the generation of Keshub Chunder Sen, all these things are lamentably absent from our present life. It is no use shutting our eyes to actualities simply because they are unpleasant. And whenever I have thought of the present state of Bengal my mind has gone back to the days of Keshub Chunder Sen, and I have yearned for a return of those days.

### THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT

We are now all of us "Swarajists," not in a technical sense, not in the sense in which the word "Swarajist" is used in the newspapers as the designation of a particular political party, but we are all Swarajists in the sense that we want Swaraj; that we want the fullest measure of freedom for national self-fulfilment. We want to grow along our own lines without let or hindrance from anybody else. We are all Swarajists in the sense that we are all more or less adherents to the Freedom Movement in the country. But when you trace back the history of this Freedom Movement you cannot ignore Keshub Chunder Sen. Keshub Chunder Sen and before him Debendra Nath Tagore and before Debendra Nath, Ram Mohan Roy, these are the three earliest, and from many points of view the three greatest apostles of

freedom not only in Bengal but all over India. They started their propaganda, not on the political life but they wanted to secure personal freedom and social freedom first and foremost of all, as the plinth and foundation of political or national freedom ; and it is absolutely necessary for those who desire real Swaraj today to understand this, that unless we are able to realise the fullest measure of personal freedom Swaraj will be no Swaraj for us, but it will be somebody else's Raj. Whether it be the Raj of a foreign officialdom, or it be the Raj of an Indian officialism, that does not matter. The substitution of a brown bureaucracy for the present white bureaucracy will not bring Swaraj to you and me. Swaraj that we desire or that we ought to desire must be built upon personal freedom. Freedom of reason so far as the individual is concerned ; the supremacy of the individual reason in the determination of what is true and what is not true, the supremacy of the individual conscience in the determination of what is right and what is not right,—these are the foundations of personal freedom. And if I sell my intellect to my leader, if I place my conscience blindfold at the feet of my leader I lose my Swaraj. I do not get it. The first thing that we all ought to understand if we really want Swaraj is that we shall not accept anything however theoretically it may be presented to us as true as long as we are not ourselves personally convinced of its truth. That is the first thing. We shall not accept anything as good unless it is supported by our conscience ;

that is not the second thing but equally the first thing.

### “ IN A STATE OF WAR ”

It has been said that we are in a state of war and in a state of war a private soldier has no right to think. His duty is to do and die, not to ask the question why. That is military discipline. If we are actually engaged, not metaphorically, then we shall have to surrender our individual judgment to the judgment of the general and why? Because I, a private soldier, handling the machinegun from this place do not know where the enemy is. That is the modern war. The artillery do not see where the enemy is. It is the General who watches the enemy's positions by means of his telescope. It is the General who understands the positions of the enemy's forces with the help of wireless messages sent from aeroplanes above. I do not know which part of the enemy's army is where located. I cannot therefore claim to exercise my individual judgment and say, “ No, I will not fire in this direction but I shall fire in another direction.” I have not got the data of judging what is to be done under the circumstances. So I say there is really a place for military discipline—a place for obedience rendered to the General by the private soldier. If we are engaged in an actual fight, I say again, and not in a metaphorical fight, then I would also say “ my duty as a private soldier is not to ask the question why, but simply to do and die.” But in the region of intellect, in the region of thought when I have



got to determine which is true and which is not true, when I have to decide what is my duty as an individual at a particular point of time in the face of difficult circumstances, I must claim the absolute sovereignty of my own reasoning and my own conscience, and upon this I must build up my national freedom or nation. Swaraj.

### FREEDOM AND THOUGHT

Freedom must be built upon thought ; all life is built upon thought : all character is built upon thought and you cannot build up the character of a free man by killing the freedom of his thought. You cannot build up the character of heroes by making them slaves, obedient to your order or to your dictation. You must give every individual, the utmost possible freedom for the exercise of his individual reason and his individual conscience for the determination of truth and his duty. And Keshub Chunder Sen laid the foundation of the Swaraj Movement by building up individual character upon the basis of freedom and purity. These are the two words that sum up practically the teachings and the message of Keshub Chunder Sen—Freedom and Purity. There can be no purity without freedom, and there can be no freedom without purity.

### PIONEERS OF POLITICAL MOVEMENT

Those who belong to the generation to which Keshub Chunder Sen belonged have really been the

pioneers of the present political movement in this country. The Indian Association was the first democratic political organisation in Bengal. We had the British Indian Association and although the British Indian Association did represent and espouse the cause not only of the zamindars but of the ryots also in those days, yet it was the organisation of the wealthier classes. It was not a democratic organisation. The Indian Association was the first democratic political organisation in Bengal—and I think possibly in all India—and the Freedom Movement which was incorporated in the political field in the Indian Association had been preceded by the great intellectual and moral freedom movement led and inspired by Keshub Chunder Sen and the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj of those days. But for them we would not have any political freedom movement in Bengal. Those who worked for this movement were not all associates or adherents of Keshub Chunder Sen or the Brahmo Samaj but they all grew in the atmosphere which the Brahmo Samaj and Keshub Chunder Sen created, and as I said the atmosphere is the main thing in nation-building even more than direct admonition, instruction or discipline.

### PROBLEM OF UNITY

Then the next thing that is troubling us today and to which reference has already been made by the first speaker, is the problem of Indian unity. It is a very difficult problem. Religion at war with religion, denomination fighting with denomination, communal

conflicts,—these sum up practically the conditions of today. How are you going to solve this condition? How are you going to solve this problem of Hindu-Moslem Unity? Pacts will not do. Pacts can only be built upon compromises, and compromises are the results of bargaining. If you gentlemen had that inside view of our political life, which I have the honour to have a little more or less, if you had been present at some of the conferences which we had immediately after the last general election in Bengal, you would have been impressed with the spirit of bargaining, each party trying to take as much as possible from the other party as part of the political loot. All compromises in politics are based upon this bargaining. From bargaining to bribery, the route is very short. Start with bargaining and you end in bribery, and there is no generic difference between bribing and blackmailing. Bribe me today, and give me a post and you will have my vote. To-morrow I shall say, "No, Sir, you will give me two posts or my vote will not be on your side."

An English gentleman was telling me the other day that if any member of Parliament were to approach any member of Government in England and tell him, "Now, look here: here is my son; you must find him a job in the War Office or in the Foreign Office. You must appoint him an attache to some of the ambassadors and unless you do it, remember I should vote against you at the next division," the first thing he would do would be to ask him to get

out. He said to me, "If he had placed the qualifications of his son before me and asked me to consider his case, I could have listened to him : but if he wanted a price for fighting on the side of the Government then I could have nothing to do with him." If you bribe, and start with bribery, you must end by submitting to endless blackmailing. This corrupts political life. No communal union can be built upon these kinds of compromises.

Indian Unity in view of the inter-communal and inter-denominational conflict in the war can only be built upon the foundation laid by Keshub Chunder Sen. If a Hindu claims that his is the only true religion and whoever is not a Hindu has got his place assigned not in heaven but somewhere else, if a Mohammedan claims that his is the only light—the last dispensation, the last one from heaven, and whoever will reject this light is foredoomed to eternal perdition ; if the Christian will say that there is no light outside the Bible and what (? without) Jesus Christ thinks there can be absolutely no manner of reconciliation, no manner of unity in this continent of many religions and many communities ; the utmost that is possible of attainment under the circumstances is that kind of peace and unity which exists in Europe. Every country is an armed camp prepared for the war. Notwithstanding the International Conference, notwithstanding the Washington Conference, notwithstanding the League of Nations, notwithstanding the Geneva Conventions, the whole of Europe, or practically

the whole of the modern world is an armed camp, and if we try to maintain this absolutism in regard to our personal or communal religion our position will be religiously and inter-communally exactly the same as that of Europe politically.

### THE REAL SOLUTION

The real solution of these internal communal disputes in India must come from a synthesis of the different religions, not from compromises, not pacts, not political subterfuges, not an union inspired by the desire to defeat those who are opposed to us and present an united front to them. Union built upon hatred lasts for a while as long as the object of your hatred is present before you and tries to dominate you but it cannot last after your fight is over. We are united, as I had occasion to say in another capacity. True, we are all united, Moslems and Hindus, co-operators and non-cooperators, for the matter of that Independants and Swarajists, we are all united, every one of us. For what ? For destruction ! We are not united upon constructive policy, constructive ideal, constructive methods. We are at war with one another. We are united in our desire to destroy and no further. And after that destruction, the deluge ! That is our mentality. With this mentality it will not be possible for us to render any help to the solution of the Hindu-Moslem problem. If there is to be a solution not only of the Hindu-Moslem problem, but of the inter-communal problem that faces us today, the

Brahmin and non-Brahmin problem, and all the other problems of that nature, it can only be solved in the life of a larger and higher synthesis. And to Keshub Chunder Sen belongs the supreme credit of indicating the line of this great synthesis.

His New Dispensation, if properly understood, is the Message of Unity. To the countries of the world there is a new message. His New Dispensation differed from the old message of Brahmo Samaj; this new message differed from the old message of the Brahmo Samaj.

### THE MESSAGE OF THE BRAHMO SAMAJ

The old message of the Brahmo Samaj was that there was truth in every religion. It considered religion on the "least common multiple measure," or that which is common to all religions is true. That which is not common to all religions we generally differ in, and these differentiations are casual. That was the old message of the Brahmo Samaj.

Keshub Chunder Sen declared: "No, not only there is truth in every religion, this is only half-truth; this is only a baby truth not a manhood truth; the full-grown truth is "there is truth not only in every religion, but every religion in its own setting, in its own place, in the dispensation of the Lord, is true and unless we can tell the Mohammedan, "I can accept your Islam as true and I ask you to accept my Hinduism as true. I do not try to impose my Hinduism upon you—but be loyal to your Islam, be a good Mussalman;" to the

Christian, "Be loyal to your Christianity, be a good Christian;" to the Buddhist, "Be loyal to your Buddhism, be a good Buddhist;" to the Hindus, "Be loyal to your Hinduism, be a good Hindu," then you will find there are no grounds of complaints between one religion and another.

"There are many mansions in my Father's house" declared Jesus Christ. There are many mansions in the House of God, and those who understand the nature of the House and those who recognise their own position in relation to that House have no quarrel with the other parts. This is like the organs quarrelling with one another, of which we read in the Upanishads and some of you at least know the story. At one time all the organs of the body were quarrelling with one another. The "eye" says, "I am superior to the nose"; the nose says, "I am superior to the eyes" and the "ear" says, "I am superior to both"; so the "eye," the "ear" and the "nose" all these organs were quarrelling with one another and trying to prove their superiority over one another. This quarrel tormented the "life" within. "Pranam," and the "life" said, "Go on quarrelling. I am going out." And as soon as "life" wanted to go out, the "eye" saw it could not see, the "ear" found it could not hear; the "hand" found it could not touch; and all the different organs found that they could not work and then they commenced to pray to "life"—"Oh Pranam, come, Oh Pranam stay: we will no longer quarrel with one another, but we shall bring sacrifice to you, all of us together." It is a very

instructive anecdote. It is a very helpful story to the men at this time.

### MOTTO OF NATIONALISM

The man in the street will go on fighting, the Hindus will go on fighting with the Mohammedans and the Mohammedans with the Christians, the Mohammedans and the Hindus will all of them go on fighting with one another until and unless we have been able to inspire all these various communities, (1) with the sense of ultimate knowledge of all conditions, (2) with a sense of their inter-dependence for the common life of their country,—the country before a community, and God above both,—that must be the motto of true nationalism. And Keshub Chunder Sen laid the foundation of this future Indian nation, (1) by inspiration of personal freedom which he gave to us, (2) by revelation of the truth of all religions and the great synthesis which he tried to make and we want that light even today. We want that inspiration even today. And if our people understand the message of Keshub Chunder Sen we shall not have to grope in the dark as we are doing today.

—*From the World and the New Dispensation*  
(November 21, 1924)

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### BEFIN CHANDRA PAL ON KESHUB

Sj. Bepin Chandra Pal narrated how he first came in contact with Keshab Chander Sen in the Calcutta



Brahmo Somaj Mandir which he used to visit every Sunday, actuated solely by the desire of being in the company of a friend of his and how later he commenced listening to his speeches, not to learn anything about religion but to learn fine Bengali as he was told by his friend that in those days there was no one in Calcutta who knew Bengali language better than Keshab Chander Sen. But his first relation with him was established through differences. He had been one of his fiercest critics but all the same he felt that Keshab's was a strange Magnetic Personality in the presence of which all criticisms must naturally stop.

Continuing he said that the New Dispensation of Keshab Chander Sen brought forth a greater, wider, higher, diviner, more universal and a more real message of modern religion than any in India or elsewhere. Raja Rammohan Roy had given to India the philosophy of universal religion. But philosophy by itself was not religion. It became religion when it was organised in the spiritual discipline. Keshab Chander had supplemented Raja Rammohan and developed the philosophy of Universalism, into the religion of Universalism. The Universal Religion that Keshab Chander gave to the world was not the universalism of subtraction, but the universalism of addition, or to put it more accurately, Universalism of SYNTHESIS, not the universalism of analysis.

### KESHAB'S MESSAGE OF ALL ROUND FREEDOM

But had Keshab Chander Sen any message for those who have been fighting for Indian freedom

today? S. Pal emphatically declared that he had. The first speech that had made him famous throughout India was essentially a political speech. An Englishman of his time had scandalised Bengali character and said that a Bengali is born a fox, bred a fox and dies a fox and the splendid retort of Keshab Chander was that an Englishman is born a tiger, bred a tiger and dies a tiger. Keshab Chander had proceeded to defend Bengali character and said that if there was fault in Bengali nature it was due to centuries of political servitude. Keshab Chander had contributed more than any one had done to the development of national consciousness in India. The honour that he received in England—an Indian as he was whose lot it was to be looked down upon all over the world—had tremendously reacted upon the psychology of Indian people who learnt from his example to get rid of inferiority complex. Yes, Keshab Chander had a message to give to all those who have been struggling for freedom in these days. He had been the harbinger of the message of a new freedom. Freedom, the speaker asserted, is one and indivisible and one aspect of it cannot be divided from another. If one wanted to be free, he must be first and foremost of all as an individual, he must be free as a member of the family, he must be free as a member of the community and he must be free as a member of the state. One who is a slave in himself, who is a slave of his society or of his priest can never be a free citizen of a free State. The speaker here emphatically asserted that he

valued freedom over everything else and if he was asked to choose between his God and his freedom he would salute his God and ask him to stand aside so that he might enjoy freedom in his own sphere.

Proceeding S<sub>j</sub>. Pal said that this message of all-round freedom was the message of Keshab Chander. He had quoted the Bible somewhere in his works : 'Know ye the Truth and Truth will lead you to Freedom.' Freedom, in fact, was the watch-word of his life. He was never a slave of a single idea, he never worshipped the same idea for two days together. The speaker particularly appealed to his Brahmo friends of the New Dispensation to talk less of Keshab and to live more of him. If they forgot the essence of the life of Keshab Chander, if they forgot his message of all-round freedom, they should rather celebrate his death anniversary than birth anniversary. Concluding he said, "What you and I are to do? Not to follow his words, but to get in touch with his spirit. It is the spirit only that giveth life. Let us grow and live in a new Keshab from this day."

With a vote of thanks to the chair and the speakers of the evening moved by Babu Mathura Nath Sinha, the proceedings came to a close.

—Navavidhan, November 28, 1928.

## KESHUB'S HARMONY OF RELIGIONS

(By G. B. TRIVEDI)

Brahmanand Keshab Chander Sen made the Brahmo Samaj an All-India Movement by his mission

tours, while before his advent it was only a provincial movement confined to Bengal. Secondly he introduced the Bhakti element by means of kirtans and prayers and by importing the idea of motherhood of God. This won for it the respect and admiration of even the orthodox Hindus from saints like Ram Krishna Paramhansa down, and differentiated it from a mere secular social reform movement. In the light of the present-day nationalistic movement in the country, Keshab's doctrine of the Harmony of Religions must be regarded as his greatest service to the country. In this doctrine is the solution of our present-day political problem of the unity of different communities and religious followers who insist on their rights. Where Mahatma Gandhi has failed, the Brahmo Samaj is sure to succeed if it closes its ranks and works up to its ideals. The near approach of the centenary celebrations, in 1928, ought to be a clarion call to all Brahmos to work for Harmony of Religions as expounded by Keshab. Let us give his message to the country, in its hour of need, by vigorous propaganda and consolidated work.

—*Navavidhan, January 7, 1926.*

## KESHUB'S PLACE IN RELIGIOUS CULTURE OF BENGAL

[By PROF. ARUN PRAKASH BANERJI]

A study of Keshab's spiritual life reveals to us that he had a three-fold mission in his life. They were:—

(1) to derive strength from the religious culture of Bengal and give it a new impetus.

(2) to draw inspiration from the Dharma propounded in Hindustan, explain its centrifugal tendencies and assimilate it.

(3) to devise a scheme of synthesis or complete harmony of the principal religious systems of the world with a view to connect them together into one religion and one church manifesting the power and glory of one supreme God.

The last two aims of Keshab's life are remembered and properly emphasised by many of us. But Keshab's relation and work with regard to the religious culture of Bengal is very often forgotten. An attempt will here be made to elucidate this aspect of Keshab's life as briefly as possible. In this connection a short summary of the development of the religious culture of Bengal will be indispensable.

The cultural boundaries of Bengal may appear somewhat shifting. But there is no doubt that the original seat of culture was Mitbila. Raja Janaka and Yajnavalkya were the principal luminaries living there. Then by Divine Ordinance Buddha came to Gaya and received God's message under the Bo-tree. Although Buddhism spread far and wide yet it not only developed some of the peculiar characteristics of the religious life of Bengal but also remained in possession of the land long after its decay in other parts of India. In the middle ages the centre of enlightenment shifted to Navadvip. There the vauntings of the learned soon gave way to the simple devotion of Chaitanya and his followers. From Navadvip, the

centre of culture gradually moved along the banks of the Ganges until it found a stationary abode in Calcutta. The country lying on the banks of the Ganges from Navadvip to Calcutta may rightly be termed the Holy Land of New Bengal. Chaitanya and Ramprasad, Ram Krishna and Bankim Chandra lived in this holy country. The religion of Bhakti and Shakti, faith in the league of religions and Deshpuja were enunciated here. Then came Keshab who lived at Calcutta.

Before stating Keshab's spiritual kinship with his predecessors who held sway in Bengal, it is desirable to note the peculiar characteristics of religious life of Bengal. Throughout its religious history Bengal remained the land of Bhaktas,—always prepared to accept and assimilate all that is true and noble in the culture of other parts of India and finally of the world. In the course of its religious development other noteworthy characteristics also developed. In the age of Yajna-  
valkya, equality of men and women in spiritual matters was recognised. This principle was admitted and fostered in the time of Buddha. The abolition of caste formed the next great issue which was upheld by Buddha and further supported by Chaitanya's doctrines. Throughout the religious history of Bengal, religion is meant to assist and develop individual as well as national life. Hence personal relationship with the Holy Spirit is sought not only through rituals and observances but also by means of meditation, prayer and devotion on the one hand, and a compromise between asceticism and the life of a householder, on the

other. It is true that when the desire for enjoyment was uppermost in the heart of the nation, spiritual bliss was sought through Shakta Dharma and many mysterious practices originated. But such religious ecstasies concentrated the vigour of the nation towards spiritual matters and out of enjoyment spiritual thirst was renewed. The result was that the religious development of Bengal was further accelerated. Moreover, it may be noted that Shakta Dharma will always afford an avenue for the spiritual development of those who were unwilling to take a detached view of life.

Keshab accepted not only the characteristic of the religious life of Bengal, but also the essential features of the principal phases of religious development. Keshab's formula of prayer was identical, with that of Maitreyi. The Buddhist mode of life, *ahimsa*, purity, *madhyapatha* and merging the individual into society found a distinct place in Keshab's life. The worship of Kali and Durga enraptured his soul. Finally Keshab not only adopted Divine Worship through hymns, but also revived the Sankirtan of Sri-Chaitanya in our country.

Such was Keshab's recognition of his predecessors. The distinctive contribution of Keshab to the religious culture of Bengal remains to be noted. Keshab's age was the age of reconciliation. Prior to him, Bengal stood bewildered on the crossing of western and eastern cultures, not knowing what to choose. Educated Bengal was divided into several groups. Among them, the community of self-centered young men, guided by their

own instinct of self-enjoyment, and drifting into the mire of sensuality, became a glaring feature of our national calamity. So in the nineteenth century there arose several reformers with their schemes of reform. Ram Krishna, brought up in the school of self-education, gave out that all religions led to the same goal and that there was no room for strife. Bankim Chandra, the first graduate of the Calcutta University, advised his countrymen to stick to the culture of their own country. Ram Mohan and Debendranath pointed out to the ideals of Upanishads with glimpses from other cultures. But they did not form a democratic Somaj—a compact body of men bent upon individual as well as national salvation. This was to be Keshab's work. He founded the popular Brahmo Somaj, wrote ethical and religious pamphlets, delivered lectures, and developed a deep religious vision which attracted such men and women that the Brahmo Somaj soon became the nucleus of cultured development of Bengal. Bengal was saved. But more than that the culture of Bengal was also saved and strengthened. Keshab realised that religions are blossoms attracting all people with their hues and fragrance and spreading the news of everlasting life of joy in the garden of God. This was the spirit of synthesis for which Bengal has been waiting for ages. It became the destiny of Keshab's successors on whom fell the mantle of cultural development of Bengal to extend this spirit of harmony in every sphere of human thought and activity, leading to a reasonable understanding and loving relationship



between man on the one hand and society, nature, and God on the other. The work of Acharya Profulla Chandra, Sir Jagadish Chandra and Robindranath, the master-artist of the world, can here be referred to as further contributions to Keshab's conception of spiritual life. Keshab may be forgotten but there is no doubt that his spirit is working through the minds of the choicest people of our age.

Time has not yet come to take a full measure of the influence of Keshab on the present workers in the cultural sphere of Bengal. It should however be noted that Keshab never advocated exclusive devotion to the religious legacies of Bengal. He knew that they were to be cherished along with the teachings of Gurus of other lands. In fact the real worth of the culture of Bengal will be revealed to those who have sat at the feet of the world-masters. The associations of our mother-land will reverberate through our hearts when we come into contact with other cultures. If the spiritual masters of the world be living with us, then the whole world will be rightly inherited by us, and then living in the cultural domain we shall not forget the height of religious growth promised to mankind by Keshab. Then the culture of Bengal will really be our own and Keshab's companionship will be our eternal heritage.

—*Navavidhan*, January 7, 1926.

## EAST AND WEST IN KESHAB

(By SIR R. N. MUKHERJI)

Forty years after the death of Keshab Chander Sen it is still difficult to appraise justly and without the bias of exaggeration the value of Keshab's life work, or even estimate the exact effect of the various forces which his magnetic and powerful personality let loose in the hide-bound and narrow-minded society of the mid-seventies. Perhaps our difficulties proceed from our inability to grasp the splendour of a picturesque and fertile genius. Has not Keshab Chander Sen himself said—"It is easy to distinguish a great man, but it is difficult to comprehend him." True it is that although well nigh half a century has passed when Keshab in the full prime and vigour of his spiritual growth preached and thundered from his little pulpit we are yet unable to realise fully the services which he rendered to knowledge, to the growth of scientific reasoning on religious matters, to social emancipation, to freedom of thought. But four decades have gone by since he passed away. Revolutionary changes have taken place in our social life—changes which, for good or ill, have loosened the centuries-old bonds of prejudice and superstition, of ignorance and blind custom. One may not wholly agree with the religious and spiritual aspirations of the movement with which Keshab Chander Sen was intimately connected, yet one must admit the great social services rendered by the emancipation crusade which Ram Mohan initiated and which after a century has not yet spent its force.

Keshab Chander Sen was one of the most brilliant apostles of the message and the ideals of the Brahmo Samaj in its most enlightened aspect. Spiritual divinations guided the destiny of the young Minister into a course which brought down upon him the wrath of orthodox Hinduism, but resolution of character and independence of spirit sustained Keshab in his worldly trials and made him the more indomitable and relentless in his pursuit of culture and freedom of thought.

All controversies regarding the harmony and oneness of the religion preached by Keshab Chander Sen are silenced when we consider, apart from the religious aspect, the great social value of his propaganda and fervent crusade in the cause of progress and advancement in Bengal. His entire life was a protest against ignorance, against tyranny, against blind prejudice. His large catholicity embraced all people ; every philanthropic work, whether it was education of the young, emancipation of the women, or amelioration of suffering, found in him an ardent champion and a forceful advocate. His was an embodiment of that rare culture in action which is fed and nourished by the noblest traditions of Hinduism, and blossoms in the light and true knowledge of the West. Keshab Chander Sen was a rebel if denunciation of ignorance and superstition constitutes a revolt ; he was an apostate, if protest against oppression and blind custom amounts to a desertion of the old faith. But he was supremely content with his spiritual light ; and reason combined in him to produce a persuasive and magnetic force

which attracted men of all shades of opinion to his banner. The torch of light which he kindled into flame may not have kept its lustre undimmed in the decades which followed his demise, but during the short period Keshab held aloft the beacon-light, he shed brilliance all round and lit up the many dimmed regions which orthodoxy and prejudice conspired to keep dark and unlit. It may profit us to find out the secret of Keshab Chander Sen's powers, which Debendra Nath Tagore—his life-long guide and friend,—summarised in this fashion—"Whatever he thought in his mind he had the power to express in speech—whatever he said he had the power to do—whatever he did he had the power of making other men do." To my mind the key of this power lay in his abundant vitality and enthusiasm. Does he not himself say—"I have always felt a cold condition to be a state of impurity—around my own life, around the society in which I lived, I always kept burning the flame of enthusiasm." Therein lies his message to young Bengal even to-day : to put forth your entire enthusiasm and energy into the work you take up and do not tire until you succeed. When this lesson is well-learned, combine it with a reasoned freedom of thought and a desire to imbibe the refined and spiritual delicacies of cultured life—and Keshab Chander Sen's life-work would be an accomplished fact and Bengal would occupy a prominent position in the comity of nations as a leading exponent of intellectual thought and culture of East.

—*Navavidhan*, January 7, 1926.

## KESHAB'S REVOLUTIONIZING VISION

(By PRINCIPAL KHUDIRAM BOSE)

As a boy of the Burdwan Brahmo Samaj M. E. School I saw for the first time in my life in November and December 1866, the great Brahmo leader who, within a decade or two following, revolutionized the entire outlook of religious thought and belief of the world by his epoch-making orations, and still more, by his magnetic personality and saintly life. In that year, at Burdwan, under the auspices of the Adi Brahmo Samaj, to which the local Samaj was affiliated, he delivered at the Medical Hall of the town, two of his juvenile orations in English, and was listened to with rapt attention by the *elite* of the station including the local Christian Mission. For me, a boy of 14, these meant very little but, all the same, I seemed to catch a little of the blessed contagion. But what stirred me to the inmost depths of my heart was a morning prayer in simple Bengali, offered by the great preceptor, from a school-bench, improvised as a pulpit, with tears in his eyes expressive of deep and genuine repentance. Later on, in 1868, as I came down to Calcutta and joined Dr. Alexander Duff's Free Church Institution, I lost sight of the great religious teacher, and found another enshrined in my heart, a sweet and charming spirit, the late Rev. Kali Charan Banerji, my school and college teacher for years and guide and philosopher and friend of my manhood, whose magnetic personality captured my imagination and all but converted me into the faith he had recently embraced.

But that was not to be. It was not long, before I recovered my first and foremost spiritual guide, in 1868, in the Brahmo Somaj of India Prayer Hall, then approaching completion. And I noticed that Collegians of those days crowded round the pulpit and platform, occupied by the great Minister, with as much enthusiasm and avidity as they do now in witnessing the historic Mohan Bagan (cricket) games at the vast *maidan* of this city. And some of the most brilliant graduates and under-graduates of the University, such as the late Mr. A. M. Bose, Mr. U. C. Dutta, Pundit S. N. Shastri, Dr. P. K. Roy were initiated by the great minister, in his new Somaj, after his secession from the parent Adi Somaj absolutely on grounds of principle,—‘onward, unceasingly onward, unceasingly onward,’ having been the watchword of the new Minister, in all his bearings and relations in life, domestic, social, spiritual and religious. And his *pertervid* orations, both in English and in his sweet mother tongue, delivered at the altar of his Mandir, at the platforms of the lecture halls and public squares, fittingly crowned his noble endeavours and enterprises in regard to the moral, spiritual and religious regeneration of his motherland, *with a sort of success that marked* it off as no mere human attainment.

The memories of his parting sermon to his great and growing congregation, on the eve of his pilgrim voyage to England, as also of that given on his return home and resumption of his ministerial services, with the grand organ that the Unitarian Congregation

had presented to his church, the divine meekness and forbearings with which he stood the scathing condemnation, meted out to him at the sacred altar of his Mandir, by his god-father, Maharsi Debendra Nath, especially invited by him to preside at a consecration Service, on grounds of Brahmananda's allegiance to Christ Jesus, are yet too green in the contemporaneous history of the Brahmo Somaj to be detailed on the present occasion.

Ever since the delivery of his maiden speech, " The Brahmo Somaj Vindicated " (which took more than three hours) in reply to the Rev. Mr. Lal Bihari De's sarcastic onslaughts upon the basic principles of his Church, and on his challenging a spontaneous encomium from the prince of Christian missionaries, Dr. Duff (himself a great orator)—" the Brahmo Somaj is a power and a power of no mean order," down to his triumphal return from his pilgrimage to England where he was lionised by influential and cultured English audiences, his life-history has been one of perennial progression, and in the fulness of time,—human limitations notwithstanding,—the One Author of all Dispensations, vouchsafed through him to an expectant humanity " The New Dispensation " as the harmony of all Dispensations. That this glorious fruition lay seminally enconced in Rammohan must go without saying. But the unique process of evolution of the spirit world has transformed and revitalized it into a grand and glorious novelty,—with everything new about it,—new flag, new dance, new stage, new pilgrimage.

The new spirit that thus dawned upon the earth inspired utterances so sanctifying and sublime that it would take generations to appreciate and assimilate them in all their bearings upon the destiny of man.

The proclamation of the church of the spirit, the doctrine of a uni-trinitarian church (*Sat Chit Ananda*) the impassioned invocation of the One-Invisible God as Mother, as the unity of all unities the New cult of Brotherhood divine, the declaration of God-vision and inspiration as the universal and natural heritage of man the enunciation of the *faculty of absorption of truth* (which our psychologists have so far failed to discover) are perhaps a few of the coruscations of the genius of the High Priest of the New Dispensation. And to-day the blessings of the Great apostle and evangelist of the New Dispensation shall descend in pentecostal showers upon his people as he sees with his Mother Divine that the sublimest truths for the inculcation of which he lived and suffered so much here, are commanding all but universal acceptance. His little but invaluable autobiography "Jivan Veda," his "Yoga," Subjective on Objective, his last message "Asia's Message to Europe" —all four stand as spiritual ever-greens and priceless heritages in the religious history of the World !

—*Navavidhan, January 7, 1926*

## KESHAB AND TEMPERANCE

(HERBERTSON ANDERSON)

I gladly accept the invitation of my friend, the Rev. Promotho Lall Sen, to write a few lines for the



Special Number, of the *World* and the *New Dispensation*, to commemorate the passing of Keshab Chander Sen. Only last week I stood in the hall of the Victoria Memorial, and pointed out to some American friends the striking life-size painting that has a worthy place in that temple of fame of those who during the reign of the gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria, helped to make modern India. History seems to show that the world needs extraordinary men and women to turn the course of history and shape the lives of those who follow them. Keshab was such a utopia-builder who, out of the facts, dark and light, of India's past, sought to get his followers to work for and strive after a new world in social reform and religious progress. If, as it is said, "human nature changes, but slowly," we may claim Keshab as one who set before his countrymen steps of ascent to a nobler and better life.

My personal interest in the Temperance Movement in India often leads my thoughts to Keshab,—who clearly saw the fatal trend of the alcoholic habit among his countrymen, and who spared not the Government of his day nor the society of which he was an honoured leader in regard to their attitude towards that habit. It is said by those who know the condition of educated Indian society in his day and who compare it with the conditions to-day that some progress towards a utopia of an absolute habit of total abstinence has been made. But it is equally, though regretfully, true that the British Government in India did not listen to his warning voice, and has little practical sympathy still

with the movement that would suppress among all classes what has been termed the huge waste of alcohol. Both public opinion and governments in India have been "tinkering with tragedy" too long. Oh, for another voice like that of Keshab to save Indian homes from the tragedy of drink.

—*Navavidhan, January 7, 1926.*

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### KESHAB'S PERSONALITY

(NAGENDRA NATH GUPTA)

[Late Editor, "Tribune," Lahore.]

It is forty-two years now that Keshab Chander Sen was called to his rest. His colleagues and co-workers also have passed away one by one, and the young lads and men who can yet recall the magnetism of his presence and the magic of his voice are old men to-day. When the split in the Brahmo Somaj followed the Cooch Bihar marriage in 1878, I remember the late Ramtanu Lahiri told me that he could not trust himself to go and see Keshab as he would not be able to resist the persuasive charm of Keshab's personality and speech. Again, when he delivered his last Bengali speech, in Beadon Park, in January 1883, a number of people had assembled in the Park determined to disturb the proceedings. There was an elderly Indian Christian standing at the gate who angrily said as he saw Keshab approaching at the head of the procession,—“What an amount of mischief one man can do.” There was a crowd of Vaishnavas near the place from where Keshab

was to deliver his address. They were in an angry mood, and some of them were saying,—“This man has made the whole country Christian!” But when Keshab began to speak, taking for his text the cutting up of the body of Sati by the trident of Siva, and developed the argument with his matchless voice and persuasive eloquence the mood of the orange-robed Vaishnavas changed and they hung breathless upon his words. Finally, when spreading out his arms, Keshab declared in accents of an impassioned appeal, “Brothers, let us pick up the scattered pieces and raise up the one God, undivided and indivisible, (খণ্ড দেবতা কে অখণ্ড করি)” the Vaishnavas threw themselves down on the grass, shouting “Hari Bol,” the tears streaming from their eyes.

That was the power of the orator. Swami Vivekananda, himself a gifted orator who made a profound impression, at the Parliament of religions, at Chicago, told me while my guest at Lahore, in 1897, that the genuine orator exercised a sort of hypnotism over the audience. I have listened to many orators, Indian, English, and American, but Keshab Chander Sen was easily the greatest of them all. The Rev. Mr. Dall, at one time a well known name in Calcutta, wrote a letter to the *Statesman*, after one of Keshab's annual Town Hall addresses, to say that the orator's “silver voice” had lost none of its compelling power. It was a wondrous voice, full rounded and of a compass that filled the Calcutta Town Hall or any large auditorium without effort, but melodious and marked by a sustained

cadence throughout. The splendour of his personality matched the marvellous gift of his tongue, and at this distance of time I recall vividly his stately and full figure, the luminous face and the large introspective eyes, the strong prominent chin and the radiating presence of that great leader of men as he used to stand in the Town Hall, a grave and dignified figure, delivering his message with an eloquence and a power of that have never been equalled.

—*Navavidhan, January 7, 1926.*

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## KESHUB CHANDER SEN IN ENGLAND

[DR. J. ESTLIN CARPENTER]

(Specially contributed)

When Keshab Chander Sen landed in England in the spring of 1870, this country was lamentably ignorant of the religious life of India. The day of her great scholars, Sir William Jones Colebrook, H. H. Wilson, who had first opened up the treasures of Sanskrit literature to English readers, had gone by. More than a generation before, Raja Ram Mohan Roy had become known by his learning, his lofty character, and his appreciation of the Gospels in his "Precepts of Jesus," to some of the leaders of Unitarian thought, and his lamented death on a visit to Bristol in 1833 had roused a temporary interest in the movement which he had founded to promote a spiritual religion free from all idolatry. The young German scholar, Friederich Max Muller, had edited the text of the Vedic hymns, and from his home at Oxford issued essay after essay supplemented

to his History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature (1860), in which he sought to make known the profound religious significance of the faith of the ancient Rishis. British Christianity was still involved in the traditional conception of the infallible authority of the Bible; and in the prevailing Evangelical teaching, the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, the Atonement and everlasting punishment, were strenuously maintained. This type of Christianity, moreover, had been practically the only form of Western faith represented by English missionaries in India.

The Unitarians were consequently the only community which had followed with any sympathy the prophetic utterance and reforming zeal of Keshab Chander Sen, and when it became known that he would visit England they prepared to welcome him with warmth. They had themselves passed through a great change in their view of the real foundations of religious thought and life. They had long been earnest advocates of the historical study of the scriptures; they had learned from the great thinkers of Germany; they had been aroused by the deep passionate voice of Carlyle; they had read Emerson and Theodore Parker; in James Martineau they had found a teacher who set them free from the authority of the letter, and opened to them the religion of the spirit. They were eager, therefore, to receive the Hindu Leader, whose glowing language had already attracted attention in this country, and in whose proposals for the social welfare of his people they saw such ardent moral conviction.

Soon after his arrival a meeting was convened on the evening of April 12, in the Honover Square Rooms, in London. The President of the British and Foreign Association, Mr. Samuel Sharp a well-known Biblical scholar, was in the chair. On the platform were representatives of ten different denominations. The resolution of welcome was moved by one of the most distinguished dignitaries of the Anglican Church, the courageous Dean of Westminster, D. Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, and it was seconded by a man whose unrivalled Indian experience gave especial weight to his presence and his words, the ex-Governor General, Lord Lawrence, members of Parliament, clergy and minister and lay-folk from various professions were in the audience, and were held in close attention as the speaker unfolded to them his essential vision of religion.

Here was a voice of rare power, eloquence, and charm. His dignified presence in the fulness of his manhood, the glow of faith in his face, his courage, his passionate sincerity, his conviction of the reality of the presence of God, all made a deep impression. With a perfect command of our language, a student of Western philosophy, familiar with the works of Hamilton and Cousin, and writers so far apart ecclesiastically as John Henry Newman and Emerson, he had found in the Christian Gospels a figure which he could reverence and love. In Jesus he discerned a conception of religion as direct and immediate as his own. He boldly claimed him as an Asiatic, and in his teaching of the Fatherhood of God, His constant energy in the universe

around us and his manifestation to the soul within, he saw the witness and confirmation of his own insight. For the sectarian divisions of Churches, all sheltering themselves under the Founder's name he had no sympathy; warning after warning fell from his lips; the pity of it was to make an increasingly painful impression upon him as he went from city to city and he did not hesitate from the outset to protest against it. But grievous as it seemed to him, it did not mar his belief that the relations of England and India were a signal instance of the action of divine Providence. With the freedom of oriental imagination he idealized the two countries, so far apart upon the globe, so different in social organisation and intellectual culture, and daringly declared, "In obedience to God's injunction England came and knocked at the doors of India, and said, 'Noble sister, rise thou hast slept too long' and India rose."

In this faith he went from city to city. We did not know till he had been among us for months how hardly it had been won. He addressed great meetings in Manchester and Liverpool, he visited Edinburgh and Glasgow. On his way south he came to Leeds and preached in the Mill Hall Chapel, of which I was then minister. It was a curious indication of the sectarian feeling against which he so earnestly protested that in arranging a meeting for him to address, objection was made to 'welcoming' him, though he might be 'received.' Happily that did not prevent a thousand people from crowding the beautiful chapel to the doors, and his

noble sermon on "The Living God in England and India" was long remembered. In his private intercourse he loved simplicity and quiet. The morning hours were spent in meditation and peace. He won the admiration of the young by his nobility of demeanour without any assumption of superiority. When he told us of the struggle through which he passed in the home where a large company of relatives lived together in one family, before he finally decided to give up the traditional usages of idolatry, and at last unbarred the gate and went forth with his young wife into solitude and uncertainty, we felt in him an element of heroism which he would himself have been the last to lay claim. He pleaded to temperance and purity, shocked at our drunkenness and prostitution; and he never forgot to demand in the name of justice and humanity a better treatment of his country by the dominant race. In one of his last sermons in London—Unitarian pulpits alone were open to him—he revealed one of the secrets of his inner life. When he was in the midst of idolatry as a youngman, he felt himself surrounded by impenetrable darkness plunged in deep spiritual gloom. 'There was none on earth to help me,' he said. 'Who came to my assistance? He could not recount the process of recovery, but he knew its source, 'My heart says, My God.' That consciousness, once awakened, never left him.' Faith in God and our eternal union with him, he once said to Miss Frances Power Cobbe, 'are not two doctrines of our creed but one.' In that inner sense of the presence of God he lived and laboured, and when he



bade England farewell he left behind in many hearts a clearer vision of the supporting power of the Everlasting Love.

—*Navavidhan*, February 17, 1926.

## KESHAB CHANDRA SEN

(BIJOY CHANDRA MAZUMDAR in the *Bangawani*  
of Asarh 1334)

(Translated by Satyendra Roy)

Of handsome and serene appearance was Keshab Chander, all that the word *soumya darshan* connotes, that was Keshab. The radiance of his cheerful face was soothing and beautiful like *soma* or moonlight. Those that have not seen him can realise this to a certain extent by seeing his portrait kept in the Albert Hall. When first I saw this devout personage he had just reached forty years of age. In his twenties he was known all over India and at the age of thirty-one by his reputation in Europe he had become world famous. The band of young students in whose company I sat near Keshab Chander Sen and heard his words, from two years after my first seeing him up to 1883, were all of them more or less older than me in age, and none of them except Priya Nath Mallick are alive today. In that band of young men one person earned a great fame in the new political movement, his name was Bhowani Charan Banerji better known by his title of Brahmo-bandhab Upadhaya.

I had the opportunity of seeing Keshab in various conditions of life and in the midst of various kinds of

work. I fully remember I never saw the shadow of grief on his countenance. When in his prayers he talked of "consciousness of sin," and called Bhagvan in half choked voice in touching language, melting the heart of his congregation,—even then on his face played the light of that gushing joy which in language can only be expressed by the word "smile." I thought then and I think so still, this happened because He whom Keshab adored was to him One constantly and vividly realised. The passionate search for the "unknown" could not give us this serenity and joy. Those that do not believe in God or consider Him a thing of imagination might say that what Keshab saw was only hallucination, but there is no way to deny that he realised something with his vision when he talked. And to speak of this I first spoke of Keshab's countenance. The world famous Ramkrishna Paramhansa, whom Keshab first discovered (cf. statement by Pandit Sahityaratna in Kamala translated in Navavidhan of July 28 and August 4, 1927,—Translator) and made adored by numerous *bhaktas* in this country, oftentimes looking at the face of Keshab immersed in *dhyana* remarked in deep emotion: "It is a fish in deep waters, and it has dived into the greatest depths." I am not a *bhakta* and therefore I give evidence of the impression of a *bhakta's* mind.

The young students of the schools and colleges got the privilege on the afternoon of an appointed date to question Keshab Chander on various subjects. Many asked absolutely irrelevant questions and some

asked explanations from him for the charges brought against him by his Virodhees (enemies). Keshab was not in the least excited or displeased with them. Looking cheerfully and lovingly into the face of the men he very calmly answered their questions, and the irrelevant questions he himself combed out and gave replies to.

In this connection, leaving the talk of students, I shall make mention of something about a great man. The famous Christian, Kali Charan Banerji, was also a man of handsome and serene appearance. We have heard more than once Mr. Banerji to say that he had seldom seen a person so calm-tempered, meek and humble, sweet-tongued and amiable as Keshab Chander. The man, who roared like a lion in his public lectures and with such earnestness supported his opinions,—that he, in private conversation and discussions could be so sweet, gentle and forbearing was strange to many.

I will mention but one event to indicate how he could fascinate men with his personal magoetism. In January of 1831 there was a large gathering of people in Beadon Park to hear Keshab's lecture. Near the centre of the Park there was a great pulpit and from this pulpit to the north gate of the Park was a crowd of people and in this crowd in several places many people were loudly speaking ill and making fun of Brahmos. When Keshab's party approached the platform the loud uproar was continuing. As soon however Keshub mounted the pulpit and pointing his left hand to the west said ' Behold there sinks the

sun in the west " there was not even a whisper to be heard in that huge gathering. To silence people in any crowd one had not to shout, the sight of Keshab's face made them stare at it in silence, although in those days in such crowds the number of his enemies largely preponderated.

The readers of the " Bangavani " must have read the articles of Sj. Bepin Chandra Pal where he states that in this age the man to raise aloft the banner of independence was Keshab Chander Sen. We shall give an inkling into the nature of this *mantra* of independence. In the domestic chapel of the Thakur (Tagores) was Keshab initiated by Devendranath Thakur and in ten other ways was Keshab obliged to Devendranath. How much Keshab revered Devendranath can be understood from only one instance that I mention. Keshab gave to Devendranath the title of Maharshi, and it is by that appropriate title that he is remembered and revered. In the chapel of the house of the Thakur family only Brahmin preachers could officiate but Devendranath, fascinated by the *mantra* of Keshab, had discarded the sacred thread and when Keshab was twenty-one years of age had ordained him a preacher after giving him a seat on his right. Keshab personally received plenty of honour and reverence, but in the chapel of the Thakur family the rule of Brahmins was preserved. Keshab had then taken a stand on the independent growth of individual thought and religious sense and on the preaching and establishment of 'equality' by the removal of caste

differences. Led by his religious sense and sense of duty he by his independent efforts established the Bharatvarshiya Brahma Somaj. He separated no doubt from the Somaj of the Thakurs, but never for a moment quarrelled with Devendranath. On the contrary on the day of the opening of his new Mandir he began his work by giving the pulpit to Devendra-nath. That men should only in their opinions and imagination talk of independence but would not dare to put it into practice Keshab with his sense of religion could never tolerate. When his dear ones opposed him, or when the world swerved to one side, Keshab never left his independence of thought or was afraid to do his duty. They in whose make of mind this spirit has not come are not entitled to repeat the formula of "independence." That is why I can assert that Keshab furnishes us with a brilliant example of doing one's duty calmly and cheerfully in the teeth of the displeasure of a whole nation. I do not mean that the reader shall all have the same opinions as Keshab ; I only hold him up as one who guided by his sense of duty could ignore the frowns of the whole world and do his work.

Keshab never showed his sense of duty by any "mobby" methods,—'vulgar' shouting or use of physical force. He calmly did his duty. When the storm rose for deposing Keshab and establishing a new Brahmo Somaj, he calmly attended the meeting of the *virodhees* and himself came forward with the proposal of his own deposition. But his enemies were afraid

lest this calmness and *tyag* should melt the heart and they prevented their *president*, Keshab, from advancing, and without permitting him to speak made the proposal of his dismissal. Keshab did not utter a single word and very calmly returned home.

I know a number of incidents of Keshab's life which I consider full of teaching and which in all these forty-four years after his death has not been mentioned in any writings or books. I know their publication will not be opposed by any member of Keshab's family on the contrary by their wide publication the life of Keshab will become clear and understood so much more. But with that event is intertwined the life story of others who are alive today and without their permission it may not be proper to publish them. *Even if permission be not forthcoming but I am informed that my publication of it will not grieve one particular individual (ekjan vishishtha vyakti kshunna haiven na) then on a future occasion I shall relate some new things regarding Keshab's life.*

—Navavidhan, August 25, 1927.

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BIJOY CHANDRA MAZUMDAR  
AT THE UTSAV OF THE  
NAVAVIDHAN PROCHAR ASHRAM  
(January 29, 1937)

Sj. Bijoy Chandra Mazumdar, B.L., retired Professor of Calcutta University, gave us some of his reminiscences of Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen. It was remarkable talk vibrant with faith in and devotion to the

great leader. He was in intimate touch with Keshub, during the closing years of his life. He was introduced to the great leader by Sjt. Trailokya Nath Sanyal and had the privilege of joining Keshub in his devotions though he could not fully realise at the time what they meant. He was acquainted with songs of Ramprosad and others, but in intense realisation of the presence of the Living God, none came up to the devotions of Keshub. This intimate contact with the Infinite brought to Keshub an intense joy that was visible on the smiling face of the great leader. His serenity remained unperturbed amidst the great trials and tribulations of his life. In case of any difficulty in the household, he would silently take his seat, close his eyes and be immersed in *dhyān* (ध्यान). He thus practised the presence of God who was his never-failing companion and helper. Keshub in fact was a God-intoxicated man and amply justified the name Brahmananda given to him by the Maharshi Devendra Nath.

Opposition to him was intensified when he declared his faith to be a New Dispensation of the spirit. We used to visit him at Kamal Kutir at this time. One evening some friends put me forward and I took courage to enquire of him why he called his religion a new dispensation. Keshub looked at me with his eyes full of tenderness and affectionately replied, "What other unsectarian name can a man give to our religion?" I shall never forget the thrill that passed through me at this direct, clear and suggestive reply. I realised then as I never did before the deep significance of this

most misunderstood name of New Dispensation. This newness is not like that of an almanac that is new for a year and becomes old in the next. It refers to the ever progressive realisation on the part of the human spirit of the eternal majesty of the Divine. The universe with its splendours is ever old, but who is amongst us who does not greet a new universe every day. The overhanging sky is assuredly old, but it is every day suggested with the fresh fragrance of the presence of God. The tiny flowers that bloom before our eyes are ever new in colour and softness and fragrance. The faces of the near and dear ones that we see around us are ever sweet, refreshing and new. So also is divine revelation that is immanent in all. The expression New Dispensation meant to me the eternal creative urge, the dynamic evolution that is behind the ever progressive revelation of God in nature, history and in the human soul.

'My spirit is willing but the flesh is weak,' said the professor so he would like to place just one thought more before the audience. He had the privilege of joining the weekly services at the Brahma Mandir when Keshub preached the inspiring sermons on Jeevan Veda—on the scriptures of life. What religious sermons can compare with them? In contrast with God's revelation in the lives of his children—all other scriptures are indirect, secondary. In the ups and downs of our lives, in our trials and tribulations, sorrows and joys, when we put our little selves as offerings at the foot stool of the Eternal, what tremendous influx of



Divine life comes to the inmost care of our being. All other scriptures pale into insignificance compared with the effulgent presence of God in the soul of man. Yet the scripture of human life is the everlasting scripture.

—From *Navavidhan*. February 11, 1937.

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## HE DIED FOR YOU

(By KRISHNA BIHARI SEN)

The death of our Minister has been quite sudden, yet, not so sudden as one might think. It was during the anniversary season of 1882 that he first felt the hand of the disease that brought upon him his untimely end. In the case of another man diabetes would not have been so fatal; but it was otherwise with him when we consider the amount of intellectual work he had to bear. He was a man all spirit; it was hard to dissociate him from intellectual work. His friends advised him not to think; but as the esteemed gentleman who attended upon him said, when appealed to on this point, it was as easy to expect the water in a kettle not to boil as to hope that his patient could give up thinking. The disease, when once upon him, sometimes slowly and steadily, sometimes rapidly and abruptly asserted its empire, and his friends had from the first a presentiment that he should not have to live long. One year passed away in anxiety and hope. He appeared once again at the Town Hall in 1883, and his last message was "Asia's message to Europe." Those who heard the lecture remarked the

effort which he went through in delivering it. There was fire in it; but there was faltering too. The stream of Divine fervour spouted from his lips, but the vessel was weak, and it was evident that greater effort might make it burst at any moment. From that time up to Tuesday last it was a process of intense agony on the part of his relatives and disciples and a course of sublime preparation on the part of himself. There was anxiety painted on the face— anxiety because he had many things to do and yet very little time to do them all. The deceased had a singular rule to guide him in all the moments of his life. He used to think that he had not more than three years to live, and he wanted always to compress his work within that period. It was this which explained the impulsive hurry of all his movements. Now or never was his motto. Whatever he conceived was immediately put into shape, and he knew no rest till it was actually carried. He never waited to think of consequences; whether the work survived or not, he was anxious to give birth to a thought; its care and preservation he left to Providence. This trait was beautifully apparent in the last year of his mortal career. Some of his most beautiful utterances came out then. He had a prevision of his coming end, and he became all the more anxious to speak out in a variety of ways. When he went to Simla his friends parted from him in mingled hope and fear. His residence in the hills began well. It was the serenest and busiest period of his life; it was

the period when he put his highest powers, when he attempted his highest flights. His devotion was at its sweetest, and his labours were the severest. He then elaborated his Yoga philosophy, and he there carried out its principles in actual life. That face which showed itself so striking after his death was only a part of the festive dress with which Providence intended that he should start on his bridal procession to a higher world. At Simla he elaborated his great gift to mankind. He taught them to SEE and HEAR and FEEL the great GOD of his being. Many a prophet had taught the way to solve the burning problem of human suffering. Prophets had died before him, and in their death was the solution of the problem which they had come to solve. In our Minister's death we get the solution of the same problem in the most striking manner possible. It explains his mission and it explains itself. How could men get through suffering? By making pain lose the character of pain, by making it sweet. How could this be done? By actual enjoyment of the sweetest object in the world, by actually seeing and communing with the Divine Mother. Look at the loving *Hari*, he said, and pain will disappear. Illness and suffering become themselves the means of our approach to God. In fact, the greater the illness, the acuter the suffering, the greater is the approach to the Holy Being, the greater the enjoyment and repose, the less is pain—an acute pain and the more welcome it becomes to the sublime devotee. It was his mission to preach God to an unbelieving world. He made

Him appear in our life, in our breath, in every drop of blood that courses through our veins, in the food that we eat, in the house that we dwell in, in money that we spend, in the cloth that we wear, in our daily business, in our real enjoyment, in our sore trials. In nature we see Him ; in individual life we feel His sublime guidance. The world is full of Him. The plain eye sees poetry, romance and philosophy everywhere in His presence ; the prosaic hand has got the philosopher's stone ; it touches everything with it and lo ! everything becomes gold. Enter into that *Yoga*, he said, and the hardest realities of life become comprehensible and enjoyable. Alas ! his disciples were too slow to understand him ; they were too dull to fathom his meanings. Alas ! The gulf became at last too inseparable between him and them. Alas ! He departed from Calcutta in broken heart and sorrow. He tried to bring them upto his height ; they had not the strength to do so. He adopted every means to make them worthy of him ; but he was thwarted, he was persecuted ; he could do nothing by mortal means. "Unbelievers, ye believe not in me ; be ready for my last message. I will do such a thing as will compel you to come round and accept my present. I will show you how a believer can die !" Oh ! the determination was fatal. The disease grew upon him. He was forced to leave Simla ; he came back a wreck of his former self. What pains he suffered ! What torture indescribable he sustained ! Not a stone that would not melt at the sight. Day and night, night and day there was

this grappling with death. Every system of treatment was tried, Allopathic, Homeopathic, Yunani and Kaviraji. Every doctor did his best, but every medicine failed. The pain was indescribable, it admitted of no relief. And in the midst of that unutterable agony, in that chamber of horrors, look at his calm, unperturbed, smiling face. When in the greatest agony, he was immersed in Yoga ; the Eternal Mother was before him and he forgot his suffering. And so the dark hour came ; by noon on Sunday last, he had virtually ceased to speak. The fits became frequent and at last unbearable. In one sense he may be said to have lost his consciousness. But it was not that. When the pain was upon him, he was alive to nothing else and he lost sensibility to everything else. When the disease advanced to its last stage, he was in a state of stupor ; but all throughout he was in Yoga. So that from an early stage of the last illness, he had ceased to belong to us. The extent of the suffering will be realized from the fact that it deprived him of the power of speech and made him dead to the world long before death came. That he was not unconscious was apparent from the fact that to the last he retained his tremendous will-force. A few hours before his death the doctors tried to give him milk ; but he compressed his lips and would on no account take it in. So they came away disappointed, declaring it was a simple psychological problem to them how one who was in that state of stupor and coma, could yet show that immense force of will.

Every symptom, indeed, of that disease, of that last life, of that last suffering, will afford matter for thought. Every incident of that mournful chapter will require study and contemplation. When the last moment came, when the struggle was over, when the last breath was taken, the unperturbed countenance ceased to show itself. Behold, the usual smile was in his face again, and he died rejoicing in the accomplishment of his mission. When the last tension was over, when the whole system had returned to repose after its deadly struggle, his nature asserted itself again and his natural smile returned once more and sat upon his lips. Here was the triumph at last ! Friends and disciples of the departed hero, do ye not believe now ? *He has died for you* ; he has shown how death and suffering can not only be conquered but actually sweetened, by the enjoyment of the Divine presence. How the stern realities of life become accessories to spiritual perfection ; how pain itself ceases to be pain and death becomes the dawn of a higher life ; how the world becomes a heaven to the sweet child nursed on the Mother's lap. *Yes, he has taken away your sufferings—learn only now to understand how and why.*

—Navavidhan, June 7, 1928.

KESHAB CHANDER SEN, 1838—1884

[By F. B. BRADLEY-BIRT I.C.S.]

No names in the Annals of Bengal in the nineteenth century is more widely known than that of Keshab Chander Sen. Spoken of as "India's Greatest Son" by

so eminent an Orientalist as Professor Max Muller, no Hindu before him ever achieved so widespread a reputation or drew so closely the attention of both East and West towards his life and teaching. His was one of the few names that was familiar during his life time not only among the vast millions who inhabit the Indian Empire but among European Nations whose knowledge of India and all things Indian was then far slighter than it is to-day. Born at a time when Western Education half understood and imperfectly applied, had yet caught the imagination of the East, Keshab Chander Sen's life coincided with one of the most important and interesting intellectual revolutions that India has ever seen. After long centuries of isolation East and West had met, and fusion of thought and speech had begun. On the one hand stood Western Civilization, with its latest scientific inventions, its latest literary achievements and its latest artistic triumphs; on the other, stood Eastern culture effete and decaying, strangled in the grip of custom and tradition.

The full force of modern thought had been let loose about the old ideals and the old beliefs, threatening to overwhelm them in its first impetuous rush. There was eminent danger that the new system of life and thought while sweeping away the old beliefs, might raise no new ones to supply their place. The restraints that the old caste system had enforced upon life generally, socially, morally, and mentally had been roughly cast aside, and the new civilisation had as yet failed to impose other restraints that had the same

binding force. The work that Keshab Chandra Sen was called upon to do was to combine all that was best in the old with all that was best in the new and to prevent a break with the old before a new religion and a new philosophy of life were found to which man might adhere. It was the old problem which so many have sought to solve without success, the reconciliation of the old and new, of the East and West. At a time, when chaos threatened, Keshab Chander Sen had the ability and the courage to formulate a new belief, purified and refined out of the old, and at the same time the power to lead men after him along the lines which he laid down. The great and wide-spread influence that his life and conduct had even upon those who did not follow him in his new belief, set him apart as one of the moving spirits of the days.

However much men might differ from him on many points, there were few who did not recognise his earnestness and sincerity. His all-absorbing desire to benefit his fellow countrymen and his constant efforts to make his new faith unsectarian and such that it might include the whole Brotherhood of man, won universal admiration and respect. In an age of self-seeking, he set a striking example of unselfishness. He voluntarily gave up all to follow the way of life that seemed to him to lead to the highest and the best. Worldly rewards he never sought and worldly honour he refused. His way of life, it is true, though an ideal to which every faith might well strive to attain, was an ideal which men in the nineteenth century found it



hard to follow. It needed the enthusiasm and devotion of the earlier ages when the world was young and life less complex. It was in direct contrast to the growing worldliness and the keen competitive spirit of the day against which it was a protest. The whole tendency of the time was in the opposite direction. The decay of the old faiths had coincided with the great renaissance of thought and education and but for the little company of enthusiasts whom that renaissance produced, it might have ended in a cataclysm of irreligion. How great was the influence of Keshab Chander Sen and how effectual were his efforts towards checking the prevailing tendency towards unbelief and immorality must not be judged merely by the numerical strength of the Somaj he had founded. His influence went far deeper and his noble life and character left an abiding impression on the thought and spirit of the day. Among the many distinguished Indians of the century there was none whose name was more widely known in Europe and throughout the East, and none who exercised a greater influence in stemming the tide of irreligion and immorality, and awakening his fellow-countrymen to a sense of their moral, social and intellectual responsibilities.

—*Navavidhan*, August 2, 1928.

## MISCELLANEOUS EXTRACTS

### I

Raja Rammohan Roy wanted to do away with all the idolatry and other evils of Hindu Society and to

establish the worship of the true, the indivisible, the omniscient and the omnipotent Creator of the universe, and socially to bring back to India the reign of reason and peace and good will.

After a long and arduous struggle Raja Rammohan Roy found it impossible to retain his connection with orthodox Hindu Society and WAS COMPELLED TO ESTABLISH A NEW CHURCH IN 1830, since known as Brahmo Samaj, for the purification of religious and moral ideas, and for the propagation of a new faith based on the lofty idealism of the Upanishads [Life and Times of C. R. Dass by Prithwis Chandra Roy, Ex-Editor of the "Bengalee" (Calcutta) 1928].

## II

It was Raja Rammohan Roy in Bengal who first raised the standard of revolt against the idol worship, the power of the priests as the interpreters of the Divine word, the conduct of the meaningless ceremonies, the seclusion of women from public life, and the burning of widows under the false name of religion. In 1828, he formed Theists' Union to recite the Vedic texts and to arrange for sermons on morals and religion. In 1830 HE FOUNDED THE BRAHMO SAMAJ where the creator is to be worshipped without any idols, and for the promotion of charity, morality, piety, benevolence and the strengthening of the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds. [Indian Cyclopaedia, edited by P. T. Chandra, second edition, 1928.]

## III

BRAHMO SOMAJ—A RELIGIOUS AND REFORMATORY SOCIETY IN INDIA ESTABLISHED IN 1830 BY RAMMOHAN ROY and reorganised in 1858 by his successor Keshab Chander Sen.

This sect recognizes one personal and all-pervading God with whom every willing soul may have communion and the universal presence and inspiration of the divine spirit, finds something divine in every form of religion, and reverences Christ though it rejects the doctrine of his deity and of the atonement. It condemns polygamy, caste, idolatry, child marriages and intemperance. [New Standard Dictionary Vol. I, Funk and Wagnalls Company, New York America.]

—*Navavidhan, August 2, 1928.*

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## THE PROPHET OF UNITY

(T. L. VASWANI)

Of great value to us today is the ancient *mantra* of the *Rishis*,—"Awake!" Almost a century ago was born in Calcutta one who became a reproclaimer of the ancient message. Shri Keshab Chander Sen was born in 1838; he passed on in 1884. But in that brief period of his life he roused not a few of his countrymen to a new vision and a new life. Keshab's was a voice of Awakening,—the most eloquent voice of his day. Sir Francis Younghusband has compared Keshab's eloquence with Cicero's. I regard Keshab's as superior to Cicero's. The eloquence of the great Greek was an eloquence of art, Keshab's was an eloquence of

inspiration. Eloquence was to Keshab a gift from God. Thousands thrilled to his voice in the Town Hall. Thousands hung upon his lips in the Beadon Square. God gave him eloquence to win men to the wisdom of higher life. He was a **PROPHET OF UNITY**. He preached the unity of science and religion. The two are not contradictory. Each may help the other. Religion is not a mass of superstition. Religion is itself a science. Science in its quest after truth, its appreciation of facts and study of laws, is a spiritual pursuit. Modern life needs the inspiration at once of science and religion. Of science;—for we must be rational, critical. Of religion;—for there is a tendency to self-assertion which is as irrational as it is irreligious. Egotism is a weakness of the modern temperament. We must correct egotism by reverence. We must combine criticism with prayer. Laplace said he had no need of the hypothesis of God. But Keshab spoke of religion as the very "science of God." Many today do not feel the need of God. Life complexity and mechanical relations are multiplying; the sense of life as a pilgrimage is weakening. Prayer has a practical value, prayer purifies and prayer releases inner energies.

Keshab preached also, the unity of religions, "I am a disciple,"—he said. And in saying this, he set us all a noble example. We must be disciples of all saints and prophets. We must have reverence for all scriptures and religions. For in all shines the many coloured light of the Spirit. Young India is called upon to build a new nation. The basis of nation building can be no narrow creed. A unifying religion of

harmony and humanity alone may answer the needs of the new national consciousness.

—*Navavidhan, September 27, 1928.*

## ON KESHUB

DR. DRUMMOND (1928)

Dr. Drummond of the British Unitarian Church, who was called upon first to speak, recalled the first experience of his meeting with the great personality of Keshab Chander Sen. It was on a May morning in 1870 that he as a child in the company of his father, first saw Keshab Chander Sen, the first Indian that he saw in his life, delivering a sermon from the pulpit of the Unitarian Church and never after was effaced from his mind the impression that the great Indian Sadhu stamped on his mind on that day. The serenely fascinating countenance of the great Indian Saint had made a very deep impression on his mind and he began to love India from that day. The first Indian he saw in life was a great personality and the impression could not have been anything else than that all Indians were like him.

Continuing he said that human memory was generally very short but a great religious leader possessed so much of long tenacious power that it was impossible for future generations to efface his memory from their minds. Keshab Chander Sen was a man of that sort. He was a great religious leader, a great creative personality with rare gifts of mind which it was very difficult to analyse. There was something of a SAINT and PROPHET in him, a race of consecration of character

which could pierce through the essentials of religions. He had further the power of making men want to do exactly the same kind of service and religious work that he himself might be doing. His wages were self-sacrifice and he had around him a band of missionaries. Proceeding he explained the contribution of Keshab Chander Sen to the store of world's culture and particularly the spirit of *scientific* enquiry that he inculcated in the observance of religious customs and dogmas. He emphasised that the one thing that they could learn from the life of Keshab Chander Sen more than anything else was to take the precepts of prophets as **LIVING** things and *not* as mere dead things which are laid upon men as burdensome weight. When prophets are taken as mere prophets, when their words are taken merely as a code of behaviour, people cease to give him the honour that is due to him. Concluding he said that it was not by discussing his life or by merely repeating his words, but by putting themselves in the same spirit of lofty and selfless devotion to the service of God and of humanity, which was the special characteristic of the life of Keshab Chander Sen, that they could truly honour him.

—*Navavidhan*, November 29, 1928.

### BRAHMANANDA

(JESUDASANUDASA PAREKH)

The Rev. Dr. Cheyne, one of the editors of *Encyclopedia Biblica*, writing in his last book bearing the very significant title "Reconciliation of Races and

Religions," a book that was published only a few months before his death in 1915, said therein the following with regard to Keshab and Baha Ullah, the Persian teacher of the Bahai movement:—

" The greatest religious teachers and reformers who have appeared in recent times are (if I am not much mistaken) Baha Ullah, the Persian and Keshab Chander Sen, the Indian. The one began by being a reformer of the Mahomedan society or church, the other by acting in the same capacity for the Indian community and more especially for the Brahmo Samaj, a very imperfect and loosely organised religious society or church founded by Ram Mohan Roy. By a natural evolution the objects of both the reformers were enlarged; both became founders of world-churches, though circumstances prevented the extension of the brotherhood of the New Dispensation beyond the limits of India. In both cases, a doubt has arisen in the minds of some spectators whether the reformers have anything to offer, which has not already been given by the Hebrew prophets and by the finest afflorescence of these—Jesus Christ. I am bound to express the opinion that they have. Such as the author of the Fourth Gospel looks forward to the results of the Dispensation of the Spirit which will outdo those of the ministry of Jesus. So we may confidently look forward to disclosures of truth and of depths upon depths of character which will far surpass anything that could in the nearer or further East, have been imagined before the time of Baha Ullah. I do not say

that Baha Ullah is unique or that his revelations are final. There will be other Messiah after him, nor is race of the prophets extinct. The supposition of finality is treason to the ever-active, ever-creative spirit of truth. But till we have already entered upon a new acorn, we shall have to look back in a special degree to the prophets who introduced our own acorn. Baha Ullah and Keshab Chunder Sen, whose common object is the spiritual unification of all peoples, for it is plain that this union of peoples can only be obtained through the influence of prophetic personages, those of the past as well as those of the present."

Sir Nil Ratan Sirkar, in the course of presidential address in the Theistic Conference of the year 1915, an address remarkable from many points of view, speaks of Keshab Chunder Sen as follows :—

" He was the type of the supreme creative artist in the sphere of religious life..... He would coin into flesh and blood as it were, the religious ideas that have been held in solution in all religious and ecclesiastical history. To mention a few of these,—the great man doctrine, the doctrine of the Logos and the Son of God, the Christo-centric community of prophets, the pilgrimage to the Saints, the communion of all souls, the church invisible, the church as the organ of the corporate religious life, the apostolical Durbar, the doctrine of special inspiration (*Adesh*) the sacraments of the new baptism and the new *Homa*, a Nava Sambhita, sacramental code, a new flag or emblem, an All-India Theistic mission, the revival of Sankirtan,



God-vision and madness in religion, the synthesis of *Yoga* and *Bhakti* as disciplines, the scripture of life (*Jeevan Veda*), the social reform programme and the marriage act. These were his amazingly prolific constructions but the most luminous of all was his vision of Harmony of all Religions and Dispensations, which will remain one of the beacon-lights of future religious history."

—*The World and the New Dispensation* (May 22, 1924)

AMERICA AND INDIA

New Bedford, Massachusetts,  
United States, America,

From

24th October, 1867.

W. J. POTTER.

To

KESHAB CHANDER SEN,  
Religious Teacher and Reformer,  
India.

Brother,

For so I am moved to address you, though you are born of another nation, have been educated in another religion, speak another language, and dwell on the other side of the globe. But, though thus widely separated, we are children of the one Infinite Spirit, hold, I believe, essentially the same faith, aspire to the same truth, and are working for the same great objects of the human welfare. Here in America, I have heard with interest of your work for purification of faith and life among your countrymen, and I have felt drawn towards you by the bonds of that common spirit which inspires all holy aspirations and noble deeds.

But I do not venture to write to you for myself alone. I am the Secretary of a Society recently organized in this country, under the name of the "Free Religious Association" of which the first article of the constitution is as follows:—

"This Association shall be called the Free Religious Association—its object being to promote the interests of pure religion, to encourage the scientific study of theology, and to increase fellowship in the spirit; and to this end all persons interested in these objects are cordially invited to its membership."

In accordance with this article, the "Free Religious Association" aims to emancipate religion from sectarian narrowness and bigotry, and from all corruptions, superstitions of belief and ceremony; and to bring religious opinion into harmony with advancing reason and science, and religious practice into harmony with the enlightened conscience and the human heart. Most of the members of the Association have been educated as "Christians" and would still claim the right to that name; though probably not many of them would care to claim it in the sense commonly defined in Christian theology. They believe, for the most part, that Jesus, the founder of Christianity, was simply a man, born and living under the same essential conditions of life as other men. They believe that he was a singularly true and holy man, who came in the line of the great religious teachers and prophets, and proclaimed as the essential truths of religion, the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of

Humanity. They believe, generally that the records of his life, in the book called the New Testament, have been somewhat corrupted with legendary and other matters, not strictly historical; and that the religious system which now claims to have descended from him has departed widely from his simple teaching and practice; and they would try to effect for Christianity precisely the reform which he tried to effect in the religion of his own time and country.

While, however, most of the members of the Association are "Christian" by birth, and would still be Christian in the free sense of the term just explained, the Association does not limit its fellowship to the boundaries of Christendom. One of its directors is an adherent of the Hebrew faith, a representative of a large progressive division of his sect in this country, who proclaim truth to be the Messiah that is to save the world. And so the "Free Religious Association" expresses and seeks sympathy with all true and earnest souls, in all religions, who are working for the welfare of mankind. It looks forward, indeed, to that day and will strive to hasten its coming when all religious divisions and distinctions will be lost in the one universal and absolute religion which proclaims the Divine Spirit to be everywhere and in all times,—the inspiration of all true thought and feeling and life.

And hence, our brother, we send this word of friendly love and greeting to you and your co-workers for the truth in India. We reach out across ocean and

continent to join our hands with yours in the noble endeavour to elevate the intelligence, to purify the morality, to relieve the misery, and to break all the oppressive shackles, political, religious, social of mankind.

Our annual meeting will be held in the city of Boston, next spring seven months from this time : and if it be possible, I hope, then to have a word of response from you to read to the assembly of American people that shall gather at our call. Any information you may be pleased to give with regard to the aims and achievements of your mission will do us eminent service.

I am, with high regard, your friend and fellow-worker of the truth.

William J. Potter,  
Secretary, Free Religious Association.  
—*Navavidhan, November 13, 1928.*

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THE BRAHMO SOMAJ OF INDIA.  
*21st February, 1868.*

To

REV. WILLIAM J POTTER,  
*Secretary of the " Free Religious  
Association," U. S. A.*

Brother,

Gladly do I accept your kind and affectionate greeting, and the sentiments of true love and the sympathy contained in your welcome message of the 24th October last. I forget the great distance between us, and feel

that our hearts are near each other, bound in the ties of spiritual fellowship. Your brotherly call has found a response in the hearts of thousands in this part of the world, and cordially do we join our hands with yours, as children of the same Father, to co-operate in the blessed work of advancing the cause of true religion. How consoling, how encouraging to us is the thought that the great movement of religious reformation, which we have humbly carried on in India for more than a quarter of a century, have met the sympathy and support of an associated body of our brethren on the other side of the globe, and that India and America, the East and the West, are to sing henceforth with united hearts, and in one harmonious and swelling chorus, the glory of the Supreme Creator !

In compliance with your request, I beg to give below for the information of the "Free Religious Association," a brief sketch of the gradual development of our church, its aims and achievements.

Thirty-eight years ago, when English Education had just opened the minds of some of my countrymen to the errors of Hindu idolatry, the late Raja Rammohan Roy, the great religious reformer of India, whose name is probably known to you, established a church in Calcutta, for the worship of the Supreme Being, under the name of the Brahmo Somaj (worshipper of *Brahma*—God), or the Assembly of the Worshipper of God. His direct object in founding this church was to persuade his countrymen to forsake idolatry and to become monotheists ; and the more successfully to accomplish

this object he made the Vedas, the earliest scripture of the Hindus, the basis of all his teachings. In other words, he professed simply to effect a revival of the Unitarian faith and worship of ancient Hinduism. But he had also a higher and more comprehensive object. He "invited all sorts of people without distinction," to unite in the worship of this common Father, the Supreme God of all nations ; and to this end he proved by appeals to the text of the Bible and the Koran, as he did in the case of Hinduism, that Christianity and Mahomedanism were both essentially monotheistic. He accordingly directed that the service to be held in his church should always be of such a catholic character as to "strengthen the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds." Practically, however, the Brahmo Somaj became simply a Hindu Unitarian Church ; and the latter object was altogether lost sight of. The congregation slowly decreased in number, till the Somaj fell into the hands of my respected friend and co-adjutor, Babu Devendra Nath Tagore, who gave it a new life and immensely extended its operations. He converted this body of mere worshippers into an association of believers, by binding them to a few articles of belief and to a covenant enjoining moral purity of life. He also started a religious journal, appointed teachers and published several doctrinal and devotional treatises ; and he succeeded in the course of a few years in enrolling thousands of followers, and helping the formation of several branch Somajes in different parts of Bengal, on the model of that founded by Raja

Rammohan Roy. All this time, however, the Vedas were regarded as the sole foundation of faith, and the members of the Brahmo Somaj were known as Vedantists. It was not till about twenty years ago that the Vedas ceased to be viewed in the light of infallible scriptures, and made room for a more catholic and unexceptionable basis of faith, viz., God's revelation in Nature and the religious instincts of man. The Brahmo Somaj since became a purely Theistic Church, and now stands precisely in the same relation to its old creed, as the "Free Religious Association" does to Unitarian Christianity. But its progress did not stop here. It is true its fundamental principles of belief were then definitely settled, and have continued unchanged hitherto. But in their application to life and in the practical development of this catholic and pure spirit, great struggles and movements have gone on for some years past. It was found that as most of the social and domestic customs of the Hindus were interwoven with the evils of idolatry and caste, it was incumbent on every true and sincere Brahmo to discountenance such customs, even at the risk of being excommunicated and otherwise persecuted. The majority kept aloof from this undertaking, effecting a safe but unconscientious compromise between the enlightened convictions of a Theist and the idolatrous social life of a Hindu. A small number, however, came forward at last and began the great work of reforming the social and domestic economy of Hindu society on the basis of true religion, which has been developed more fully year after

year, and has lately resulted in a variety of practical reforms, such as the abolition of caste distinctions, the marriage of widows, intermarriage between members of different castes, the education and emancipation of women etc. With a view to render our church wholly free from the narrow spirit of Hindu sectarianism, and the evils of Hindu social life, and to establish it firmly on a pure and catholic basis, by incorporating into its theology the truths of all scriptures and admitting into its membership theists of all nations, and bringing its social life into harmony with the pure dictates of conscience, the advanced Brahmos organized themselves into a society in November 1866, under the name of the "Brahmo Somaj of India." This society also seeks to establish closer intercourse and more active co-operation than hitherto existed among all the Brahmo Somajes in India, and to propagate our faith more extensively and systematically throughout the country. Our Church is thus at present an organized Theistic Church, Indian in its origin, but universal in its scope, with aims to destroy idolatry, superstition, and sectarianism, and propagate the saving truths of absolute religion and the spiritual worship of the one true God, and likewise to promote the intellectual, moral, and social reformation of individuals and nations, and thus make Theism the religion of life.

It is impossible to calculate the exact number of the members of our church, as there is no ceremony of initiation amongst us : nor is such ceremony possible or desirable in so rational and spiritual a faith. Nearly



two thousand have subscribed to the covenant above alluded to, or have signed some other simpler form of declaration; the names of such have been registered. But there are many thousands more among my countrymen who in their hearts deny Hinduism and believe in the fundamental doctrines of our church. The fact is, the tendency of the age here, as I believe in other parts of the civilized world, is towards Theism. All who receive liberal English education renounce idolatry; of those some embrace orthodox Christianity, some become sceptics, the rest glide into the Brahmo Somaj, and become Theists in some form or other.

There are at present upwards of sixty Brahmo churches in the different presidencies and provinces of India where the local Brahmos assemble every week for the purpose of worship, divine service being conducted in the vernacular language by persons previously selected from among them for their superior wisdom and piety. Hymns, sermons, prayers, meditation, and the reading of Theistic texts from the Hindu and sometimes from other scriptures compose the service held in our churches. On special occasions service is conducted in English.

For the more extensive diffusion of our religion several books in speculative and practical Theism have been published from time to time in the vernacular language, as well as in English and also some periodicals which have a large number of subscribers and readers all over the country. A Fortnightly English paper, "The Indian Mirror," is published in connection

with our mission, which discusses political, social and religious subjects. We have also about a dozen missionaries, men who have of their own accord given up worldly pursuits, and, depending upon the voluntary contributions of the Brahmo community for the bare necessities of life go about the country visiting the Brahmo Somajes, and preaching truths of our holy faith to the educated natives and sometimes also to the lower orders of the people. The disinterested and zealous exertions of these missionary brethren exert a very powerful and living influence, both in sustaining and quickening the moral life of the Brahmos scattered over the country, and in increasing the number of our adherents.

For a full exposition of the doctrines of our creed, I beg to refer you to the two sets of our English publications which I have already forwarded to your address. I may, however, only observe here that, professing as we do the universal and absolute religion, whose cardinal doctrines are the "Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man," and which accepts the truths of all scriptures and the prophets of all nations, we heartily sympathize with you and the other members of the "Free Religious Association," as brethren in common faith and co-workers in the same holy cause.

Therefore with the deepest joy and with all the fervour of brotherly love do I welcome your kind message and, in the name of thousands of fellow-Theists in India, reciprocate the affectionate regards of "the Free Religious Association." Believe me it is no mere formal exchange of compliments. To India, at this moment,

such sympathy of the American nation, is inestimably aluable, and she receives it with the enthusiasm of national rejoicings. Long and anxiously have we laboured and prayed for the light of truth amidst the awful darkness of idolatry and corruption, struggling with hardships and difficulties, and encountering opposition and persecution of no ordinary kind, the Merciful God alone helping us onward. And now we are rejoicing in the light vouchsafed by Him, we have begun to feel the heavy responsibility attached to it of extending its blessings to other lands. At such a time, the cheering intelligence communicated by your similar labours and achievements in America serves to strengthen our hands, and increase our joy and faith and hope a hundredfold. We now feel as we never felt before, that God's religion shall spread throughout the length and breadth of the world, destroying all false creeds and sects, and uniting all nations in one universal brotherhood ; and it affords us inexpressible delight that the noble American people have come forward to co-operate with us in paving the way for the future church of the world. May God help us in carrying out the great work.

Trusting you will kindly keep us informed of the proceedings of the "Free Religious Association," and offering our best wishes and prayers for its welfare and success.

I remain heartily yours in Theistic fellowship,

KESHAB CHANDER SEN,  
Secretary, Brahmo Somaj of India.

—*Navavidhan*, December 13, 1928.

## KESHUB A SINGULAR MAN

[MOTILAL DAS (Dacca)]

Behold the Singular Man of Navavidhan!—the  
“Soul of New India”!—“that Rare Flower of the  
East!”

Sree Ram Krishna Parambansa endearingly calls  
him “মায়ের বছরাই গোলাপ গাছ”!

(The Rose Tree of the Heavenly Mother, that smiles  
with flowers throughout the year!)

Pahari Baba the celebrated saint of Ghazipur, looks  
at him and exclaims—

“কেশো বাবা অবতার হায়!”

Bengal\* regards him as a “Voice in the air,” that  
“breaks the spell, and rouses the sleeper from his  
sleep and communicates the flutter of New Age into  
an all but dead system.” Madras hears this “Voice”  
and gives him the name of “The Thunderbolt of  
Bengal.” Bombay† pays homage to this great  
“Teacher-Reformer-Sadhu-Bhakta” in a way quite  
new to that Land of Heroes.

## EUROPE GREETES HIM.

“Servant of God—Greetings. From the first time  
your name and mission became known to me, my soul  
rejoiced, and I gave thanks to God that it had pleased  
Him to write all truths, and thus produce peace on  
earth and good will among men. I hail thee and the

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\*Vide estimates of N. N. Ghosh, Surendranath Banerji etc.

† Do. Do. Do. Justice M. G. Ranade and Dr. R.  
G. Bhandarkar.

new era with joy and gladness. Thy star risen in the East shines even unto the West, and shall continue to shine until its rays encircle this planet with a belt of glory. Even so. Amen."—*C. H. Hassal.*

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### AMERICA WHOLEHEARTEDLY RECEIVES KESHUB

The new Message of Navavidhan, from the New Messenger of God:—

It seems that the Eternal spirit is moving upon the face of the waters both in the East and the West, in order to bring Harmony out of Chaos.—*Henry Peterson.*

### AFRICA HEARS THIS

"Voice from the Himalayas," and responds warmly :

"Before your magnificent conception all else seems dwarfed and stunted."—*Maurice Davies.*

### II

"Sree Keshab is indeed the wonder of the Nineteenth Century," as General Walker styles him.

He is all things unto all men, because his all-in-all is God and God dwells in him with Humanity.

The Eternal and Infinite One is the be-all and end-all of his existence, and burden of his life-song is—

*One God, One Man, One Church.*

Saith he—

"The whole Humanity is *one* and there is no room for *me* or *us*. Up above in Heaven there is

*One God*, and down below on earth there is *One Man*."—*Prayers*.

\* \* \* \*

He is *one* with Nature, as with God and Man, and Nature "speaks soft and sweet music" to him. He feels and enjoys the harmony of the whole universe, because he is in tune with the Infinite.

Saith he—

"Great God Nature stands between Thee and Man ; and no one can know Thee unless his heart is attuned to the spirit of Nature. Make my mind one with Thee in Nature"—*Prayers*.

"Nature is love, and discord. Nature reconciles, and never disunites. The name of Nature is Harmony.—*Prayers*."

Indeed, his soul's delight is to find and see God vividly in Nature ; and everything in the amplitudes of Nature is to him a Messenger from God, sent for edification.

\* \* \*

Sree Keshab is the very embodiment of *Harmony*. He is called to unite all, reconcile all, bind all."

Harmony is indeed the Pole-star of his life. It is an axis on which the science of Navavidhan proclaimed by him revolves.

Listen to his prayer again—

"O Thou Most Ancient and yet Ever-New and Ever-Beautiful God, grant that we may realize in our life the harmony of all Thy Dispensations. As followers of the New Dispensation let us combine in our

character the various elements represented by Sakya, Moses, Christ, and Chaitanya. Teach us to concentrate in one focus all the fragments of Light which lie scattered in different places and in different ages."—*Prayers.*

His character is a living illustration of the harmony of work and devotion. Too much work makes the heart dry, and too much devotion induces quietism and makes one neglect the important duties of life. It is he who has beautifully harmonised the two. He is always devout in the midst of his daily duties, and ever mindful of his duties in the midst of absorbing devotion. His hand works out Divine Law like an untiring machine, while the heart is always warm with Divine Love.

### III

Sree Keshab's life is quite a new thing to this world of discord and disunion. It is absolutely synthetical, and its very breath is *Unity*. It unmistakably implies Fusion of Faith, Love and Charity in the highest harmonious development.

*Truth* is his eternal habitation, Love his daily food and drink, and *Sanctity* his joy and peace for ever.

His *Faith* has nothing to do with Abstraction or Reflection. It is not simply "the substance of things hoped for," or "the evidence of things not seen." It is *direct vision*.

By *Vision* he means not hallucination, but "perception of the stern realities of the spirit-world, the direct apprehension of God and Heaven in consciousness."

He beholds God in Nature and in Humanity, as vividly as men see external objects. This "Seeing God" is as easy as the process of breathing.

He lives in God to have Faith, and so is the master of untold treasure.

He has found the Rock of Faith, and his heart rejoices in having seen the God of his salvation.

Hark—

Blessed be my God, I have seen Thee face to face, and heard Thy word of wisdom ;—of this I am sure ; of this I am absolutely certain. How happy I am if my faith is known to Thee. O my heart's Delight, give me yet more faith. and may the joy of trust abound in me."—*Prayers.*

\* \* \*

Deep and hidden is his *Love* of God and Man. It is inwardly active for service, and outwardly calm and impassioned. He is uninterruptedly walking in the path of ever-growing Love, and to him the way of Love is the way of eternal progress.

His *Love* is universal, and rolls ceaselessly onward. It means going out of self and its absorption in Divinity and through Divinity in Humanity. He is like a pilgrim who has left home and gone away, never to return. He lives within everybody else but his own self, and in every place except his own home.

His *Love* also means intense suffering for the good of Mankind. He is indeed an "eternal exile," and his shelter is in destitution, and his joy in compassion. To look at him is to feel a mysterious stirring within,



which impels the heart to move upward and silently knock at the celestial gate of Mercy. Listen to what he says, in a letter, dated 20th August 1865, addressed to Maharshi Devendra Nath,—

"I am poor, sufferings are my food, anxiety my rest, and on a bed of thorns my sleep. My mission is to preach a religion of reconciliation. Woe to me if I cannot verify it in my own life. Glory to truth. Peace to you all. May the death of this insignificant servant give life to my country."—(English Translation.)

Hear again what he says to his Heavenly Father in a prayer—

"Visit the excommunicated and poor in their loneliness, O Lord, and cheer their cold desolation. Teach us to give pity and love when peace of mind has fled, and to speak sweetly unto those who suffer in mind and body. To the home of misery teach us to bring consolation, to the bed of sickness comfort, and always stand by the oppressed and deserted."—*Prayers*.

\* \* \*

"Kindle in me, O Holy Spirit, the flame of purity and piety wherewith I may kindle it in those souls who are around me. Create in me a depth of sweetness and peace of which I may partake with other. Lord, let my thoughts and feelings be better than my words, my actions better than my thoughts and feelings, and my life better and purer than anything I can outwardly do."—*Prayers*.

God has heard this prayer of Sree Keshab, and kindled in him the "flame of purity," which is to purify and illumine the heart of humanity gradually.

He is pure in all relations of life, and his soul is like a blazing fire.

His passion is *purity*, and the one prayer coming out of his heart is—"Father, let me grow from holiness to holiness, until becoming pure in heart I behold the light and glory of Thy sanctity."—*Prayers*.

His purity presupposes the total extinction of self. He offers his all, whether temporal or spiritual, to the Service of God, and God's holiness becomes his nature.

\* \* \*

Sree Keshab's life connotes perpetual progress Heavenward. He is ever growing in Truth, Love and Sanctity, and steadily advancing towards Divine Perfection. Saith he—

"I am steadily and continuously advancing towards Perfection. In childhood and in youth I have run towards it and after death I shall have to fly thereto."  
—*Jeevan Veda*.

—*Navavidhan*, January 10, 1929

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## KESHAB'S PLACE IN THE BENGALI LITERATURE

[KUMUD BANDHU SEN (Translated)]

There was a revolution of thought in the Hindu Society at the commencement of the British Rule after the close of the Mahomedan Rule. All the voices leading to the downfall of a nation were there. All sorts of degeneration and degradation, political, social and

religious were there—springing from a tiny seed into a large tree, under their baneful influence, the dying Bengali nation became almost dead. Just at that moment, our slumbering nation came in contact with the newly civilized living British nation. The British brought, with its new foreign goods, new life into this country and startled this benumbed nation like an electric current. This influx of new life renovated the sinking Bengali nation and infused it with new thoughts and new aspirations. The early dawn of this new life began with Raja Ram Mohan Roy, it grew and developed under the influence of Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore and became brighter and effulgent at the touch of Keshab Chander Sen. But it is to be regretted that we always forget the names of these three Great men, the Creators of Modern Bengal. Have we ever considered their claim for the infusion of the spirit of Nationalism into our society which is increasing and expanding daily? Do we ever remember before we are going to establish Independent League that it was Rajah Ram Mohan who first inaugurated and instilled into the mind of this nation, the idea of Independence? He first saw the vision of "Independent India—friend of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland."

Do we ever think about of the silent devotee Debendranath's God-vision and Hearing of God's voice amidst the worthless imitation of Western civilization?

Do we recall to our mind the thrilling and inspiring words of Keshab Chander before engaging ourselves in petty wranglings between sect and sect? It was

Keshab Chander who first went to the Western world to preach the unique and singular message of India. It was Keshab Chander who first crossed the Atlantic to establish a Spiritual relation between the East and the West. It was Keshab Chander who first leavened the Indian nation with the Spirit of Nationalism. Keshab Chander was only a social Reformer—he also tried to harmonize and synthesize the faiths of different Religions, the orders of various religious services, whereas Rajah Ram Mohan preached only the Religion as inculcated in the Upanishadas and tried to unite in the absolute God-head the different religions of the world.

Ram Mohan gave the form only of the Bengali Prose and Keshab Chander really put life into it. After Ram Mohan and before the advent of Bankim Chander, Keshab Chander's Bengali Prose writings were the simplest, sweetest and best. The language of his Bengali prayers, speeches, sermons (সেবকের নিবেদন) is at once pure and heart-melting—sincere language of a sincere heart. We have altogether forgotten to record in the history of Bengali Literature this gift of Keshab Chander. We hardly say, in our Literary meetings while discussing the history of the Bengali Literature, anything about Keshab Chander's making the Bengali Prose thoughtful, powerful and living, making it the vehicle of expressing his innermost thoughts. He wanted to acquaint the educated Bengali with the riches of other languages by inducing his followers to translate into Bengali the Scriptures of other religions. Ram Mohan's language is full of Sanskrit and Persian

words while Keshab Chander's diction is bereft thereof containing very simple words only and breathing poetry and lofty sentiments.

“স্বথ কি পেয়েছি ? তোমার সিঁহুর মত ঠোঁট দেখে আমার কালো ঠোঁট সিঁহুর হয়ে গেল। হাসিতে কেঁপে উঠলে, একি হয়েছে ? আমি তোমার হাসিতে মিশিয়ে যাব।—”

“আমি যে শুকনো পাতা কুড়ায়ে মরিতাম—আমার কি ঐল ? ভক্তিতে মাতিলাম ? খুব মাতাও—ভারত মাতাবে, জগৎ মাতাবে।”

It will appear from the above extracts that there is no Sanskrit element therein and it is the heart's language of a true devotee though having some admixture of English formations. However, Keshab's genius turned the same into pure and unalloyed Bengali.

Keshab was the first man who enriched the Bengali Prose with the grandeur and beauty of mysticism. He gave the colloquial language a new and beautiful form and created a powerful and living Bengali Prose.

“তোমার প্রেমখানা ভারি কোমল, কুলগুলও টিপলে বোধ হয় যেন পাথর—তোমার প্রেমের তুলনায়।”

“হে পুণ্যময় জগদীশ, ইচ্ছা করে দৌড়ে গিয়ে গায়ে হাত দি তোমার ! কেন এমন সুন্দর হয়ে' এলে ? আপনার মুখ আপনি আঁক ; এ বেদেও নাই কোরাণেও নাই।”

“আমি ও-মুখ খুব ভাল করে দেখব—এই যে কাছে আসছি, আর গা দিয়ে কি খসে যাচ্ছে—খোলসের মত পড়ে যাচ্ছে। ঐ যে জ্যোৎস্না গায়ে পড়ল, চামড়া মলা শুদ্ধ প'ড়ে গেল। একটা কি প্রকাণ্ড চামড়া। আমার প্রাণটা হালকা হয়ে যাচ্ছে। এত কাছে এসেছি তুমি—তোমার সুন্দর যে মূর্তি—শেয়ে খুব সুন্দর হয়ে উঠলে তুমি—

এটা কথার দোষ—ছিলেই তুমি সুন্দর। আমার এই পোড়া চকুটা দেখতে পাচ্ছে—সব রং গুলি মিলে কি সুন্দর হল।”

“বাদের মুখ দেখলে পৃথিবীর লোকের ঘৃণা হয়—তুমি তাদের মুখ দেখতে চাও। পোড়ার মুখে কেমন করে সোণার দৃষ্টি পড়ে বল দেখি?”

“তাকাইয়া আছ, পদ্মকুলের ত্রায় চকু ফুটিয়াই আছে। কি দেখছ? তোমার কাছ থেকে টাকা কড়ি চুরি করে নিয়ে কত অস্ত্র কিনেছি—তাই দেখছ? একবার রাগলে না? একবারও না? রাগাবার এত করলাম—ঘাট হয়েছে, তুমি স্নেহময়!”

“কোথায় হুঁয়া, কোথায় পিঁপড়ে। একটা সাধু একটা পাতকী—দুই তোমাকে ডাকছে। কে আগে তোমার গান ধরে—কে আগে তোমার স্তব করে? নদী আগে ধ্যান করবে, না কুল আগে ধ্যান করবে? কে আগে নমস্কার করবে? হুড়াহুড়ি লেগেছে। আমি জ্ঞানতাম—আমরাই ব্রহ্মজ্ঞানী,—এখন দেখি, ব্রহ্মাণ্ডটাই কেমন ষোড়হাতে তোমার পূজাটি করে।”

“এই ত ঘাট, এই ত সেই পরলোক সমুদ্রের ঘাটে ইহলোক ছাড়িয়া এই ঘাটে আসিলাম। সামনে পরলোক। অনন্তকাল সাগর ধু ধু করিতেছে।”

Keshab's Bengali Prose is entirely different from that of Rajah Ram Mohan even from those of Maharshi Devendra Nath and Akhoy Kumar. The language of his “হিমালয়ের গাত্রোত্থান” (the Rise of the Himalayas) and “বাগ্‌দেবী” (the Goddess of Voice), is at once telling and sublime. His prose is all poetry. In Bankim Chandra, we see a natural development of Keshab's this simple style. Keshab Chander was a devotee, seer and sage. Keshab though brought up under puritanical Christian influence, saw and realized many things

of the Spirit world coming in contact\* with Ram Krishna Paramhansa. On Sunday, 22nd August 1880, on the occasion of the 11th Bhadrotsava, Keshab spoke with his "God-gifted organ-voice" about God-vision in the following manner :—

“আমি সত্যকে সাক্ষী করিয়া বলিতেছি, আমি মাকে কল্পনা দ্বারা নির্মাণ করি নাই। মার স্বরূপ-সম্পর্কে আমি যে সকল বর্ণনা করিয়াছি, সে সমস্ত সত্য—অভ্রান্ত। সকল বর্ণনাতে ভ্রান্তি ভ্রম কিছুই নাই। আর রূপ ঠিক যেমন দেখিয়াছি, সেইরূপ বলিয়াছি। মার মুখে যাহা শুনিয়াছি, ঠিক তাহাই বলিয়াছি। আমার নিজের কল্পিত কথা কিছুই নাই। তোমাদিগের মধ্যে কেহ কেহ বলিতে পারেন, যাহাকে ব্রাহ্মেরা এক বলেন, আমি তাঁহাকে তেত্রিশ কোটি বলিয়াছি। আমি এককে বহু কল্পনা করিয়াছি। আমি এখনও বলিতেছি, যদিও আমার মা এক তাঁহার রূপ গুণ অসংখ্য ও অগণ্য। যদি মার কোটী রূপের কথা বলিয়া থাকি, সে এই জ্ঞাত যে অনেকগুলি রূপই স্বচক্ষে দেখিয়াছি।”

It will appear from the following extract, how he saw the form of the formless God.

“কে বলে মার রূপ নাই? ইহা কেবল দাঁকি দিবার কথা। তোমরা কি মার রূপ দেখিবার জ্ঞাত এতদিন আকুল হইয়াছিলে? এতদিন জননার বিচিত্র রূপ তোমাদের কাছে কেন প্রচ্ছন্ন ছিল?”

\* [Translator's note : The proposition of the writer of the foregoing article that Keshab's spiritual life was much influenced and shaped by the venerable Paramhansa of Dakshineswar has no foundation at all and quite imaginary. Long before his acquaintance with Paramhansa, in Monghyr, in the year 1863, Keshab used to realize vividly the Divine Spirit of God and used to hear His voice in the dictates of conscience. Miracles were performed at Monghyr at that time.]

Keshab, coming of a Vaishnava family, preached with thundering voice, the claim of Chaitanya (as a prophet). He believed and felt that Radha of Radha-krishna was the woman-soul and Krishna the man-soul and there was a union of these two different natures in Sri Chaitanya, the combination of Radha-Krishna. In literature this is a pure scientific truth. Keshab addressed New India and spoke about this message, this new conception, in the following words :—

“তোমরা যে বহুদিন হইতে মহাপুরুষ স্বীকার করিয়াছ কিন্তু ভাগবত পর্য্যন্ত মানিয়া কেন থাকিলে ? চৈতন্য-চরিতামৃত কেন গ্রহণ করিলে না ? নবীন হিন্দুস্থান ! তোমার রাধাকৃষ্ণ,—এখন মথুরা-বন্দাবনের রাধাকৃষ্ণ নহেন। তোমার রাধাকৃষ্ণ এখন যুগলমূর্তি পরিত্যাগ করিয়া নবদ্বীপে শ্রীচৈতন্যরূপে প্রকাশিত। এখন একাধারে দেবদেবী—উভয় প্রকৃতি, নরনারী—উভয় প্রকৃতি। এখন রাধা ও কৃষ্ণ স্বতন্ত্র নহেন, দুই-ই শ্রীচৈতন্যের মধ্যে লুকাইয়া রহিয়াছেন।—”

Keshab Chander observed, with his spiritual eyes, that in every man there was a union of this woman-soul and man-soul. He spoke thus :—

“চৈতন্যদেব প্রেমধর্মের ভিতরে বৈরাগ্য স্থাপন করিলেন; নরের প্রতি নারীর প্রেম এবং নারীর প্রতি নরের প্রেমকে তিনি বিস্তৃত করিলেন।”

Though Keshab Chander was a Brahmo-householder an erudite scholar, he never looked down upon asceticism. He realized harmony between love and asceticism. He thus addressed those that maintained that Sri Chaitanya was an ascetic and therefore his religion could not be an ideal religion, asceticism could not be an ideal creed.



“অজ্ঞানলোকে বলে চৈতন্যের ধর্ম অপূর্ণ, কেননা তিনি নারী প্রকৃতিকে একেবারে পরিত্যাগ করিলেন, কিন্তু জ্ঞানী বৈষ্ণব বলেন, মহাপ্রভু শ্রীচৈতন্য বাহিরের মাতা স্ত্রী প্রভৃতি ছাড়িয়া নিজের হৃদয়ের মধ্যে নরনারীকে এক করিলেন। ঈশ্বরের প্রতি প্রগল্ভ, ভক্তিই তাঁহার শ্রীরাধিকা—তাঁহার নারীপ্রকৃতি। তাঁহার প্রাণের মধ্যে কৃষ্ণভাব রাধাভাব উভয়ই প্রস্ফুটিত হইয়াছিল—তাঁহার জীবনে একাধারে দেবদেবী দুই অবতার। তাঁহার পূর্বে যুগে যুগে একাধারে এক এক ব্রহ্মগুণের অবতরণ হইয়া আসিতেছিল; কিন্তু তাঁহার জীবনে নরনারীর মিলন হইল। তিনি একাধারে রাধাকৃষ্ণের মিলন, যোগভক্তির মিলন, প্রেম পুণ্যের প্রবাহ, নরনারীর যোগ, অমুরাগ বৈরাগ্যের সম্মিলন।”

In answer to the charge brought against him by his Brahmo followers for perceiving the worship of Spirit in the so-called Hindu Form-worship, Keshub Chander thus expressed himself in his lecture on “বাগ্‌দেবী” (the Goddess of Voice).

“যাহারা একপ্রকার পৌত্তলিকতা পরিত্যাগ করিয়া দৃষ্টবুদ্ধি সহকারে ব্রাহ্ম সমাজে আর একপ্রকার পৌত্তলিকতা আনয়ন করিতেছে, সামান্য মূর্তি-উপাসকদিগের অপেক্ষা তাহাদের অবস্থা আরও শোচনীয়। যাহারা মুখে আপনাদিগকে ব্রাহ্ম বলিয়া পরিচয় দেয়, কিন্তু চলে না, বলে না, নড়ে না;—জীবনের লক্ষণ দেখায় না, এমন এক কল্পিত দেবছায়া পূজা করে।”

“তোমরা যে বহুদিন হইতে প্রতিজ্ঞা করিয়া বাসিয়া আছ—সেই এক পুরাতন জীর্ণ কল্পিত ব্রহ্মরূপ প্রত্যাহ দেখিবে। তোমরা ইচ্ছাপূর্বক এক মৃত না কে গ্রহণ করিলে। কিন্তু আমার না সেই আত্মশক্তি—জীবন্তশক্তি, মৃত নহেন, তিনি প্রতিদিন নবনব রূপ ধরেন এবং নবজীবন দান করেন।”

In the course of his above-quoted speech Keshab drew with his usual eloquence the attention of the entire Indian nation in the following terms :—

“আমাদিগের নববিধান একদিকে যেমন সার্বভৌমিক, আর একদিকে জাতীয় লক্ষণাক্রান্ত। ইহা একদিকে সমুদায় সাধুদিগের সঙ্গে সম্মিলিত হইয়া একগোত্র, একজাতি, একবর্ণ হইয়া গিয়াছে—আবার ইহা আপনার বিশেষ-বিশেষ ভাব প্রচার করিবার জন্য আপনার জাতীয় স্বভাব, জাতীয় লক্ষণ রক্ষা করিতেছে। ইহা দেশীয় বিদেশীয় সকল ধর্ম প্রবর্তককে সন্ধে রাখিয়া তাঁহাদের যশঃকির্তন করে, কিন্তু ইহার বক্ষে হিন্দুশোণিত প্রবাহিত। অপর ধর্মের, বিজাতীয় বেশ পরিধান করাইয়া ঈশ্বর এই নববিধানকে প্রেরণ করেন নাই, ইহাকে তিনি জাতীয় বেশে সজ্জিত করিয়া পাঠাইয়াছেন। ঈশ্বরদত্ত এই বেশ আমরা চিরদিন রক্ষা করিব। এই হিন্দুজাতীয় বক্ষ হিন্দুস্থানে খুব বন্ধমূল হইলে, হিন্দুরক্তে খুব পরিপুষ্ট হইলে, তবে চারিদিকে ইহার শাখাপ্রশাখা বিস্তৃত হইবে। আমরা ঈশা, মুসা, মহম্মদ—সকলেরই প্রণত ভক্ত, কিন্তু জাতিতে আমরা চিরদিন হিন্দু থাকিব।”

Seeing that Brahmos were going to be denationalized, he denounced that spirit in the following strong terms :—

“হে ব্রাহ্ম, যতই তুমি হিন্দুর প্রকৃত ধ্যান, যোগ, বৈরাগ্য, কোমলতা, ভক্তি প্রভৃতি বিবিধ রসে অভিষিক্ত হইবে, ততই তোমার ধর্ম জগতে আদৃত হইবে; যতই তুমি তোমার স্বজাতীয় আর্থ্য-স্ববিগণের ত্রায় ধ্যান-পরায়ণ যোগী হইবে, শাক্যের ত্রায় নির্বিকার নির্বাণপ্রিয় হইবে, চৈতন্যের ন্যায় প্রেমোন্মত্ত হইবে, ততই আগ্রহের সহিত আমেরিকা, ইউরোপ, চীন, তাতার প্রভৃতি সমুদায় দেশ তোমার ধর্ম গ্রহণ করিবে। যতই তুমি স্বজাতির গৌরব রক্ষা করিবে, ততই নববিধান জাতীয় গৌরব ও বিক্রম লইয়া দেশ-দেশান্তরে বিস্তৃত হইবে।”

On "Liberty" Keshab stirringly spoke as follows :—

“অধীনতা মানুষকে মারিয়া ফেলিতেছে। স্বাধীনতা প্রদাতা কোথায় রহিলে? মানুষ কেন এত কষ্ট পাইতেছে? অধীনতা ভাবের সঙ্গে একবার যুদ্ধ আরম্ভ হউক। মা শক্তিরূপা! হুকারে শত্রুদল তাড়াও। আর পরের দাসত্ব করিব না। বুঝিতেছি মা অধীনতা দাসত্ব ভয়ানক নরক।”

[Translated by Debendra Nath Bose from "*Basudhara*" for Pous, 1335, B. S.]

—*Navavidhan*, January 3 and 10, 1929.

## KESHAB CHANDER SEN

(DR. F. C. SOUTHWORTH'S ADDRESS)

It is a rare privilege which you have given me as an American of joining with gentlemen from India in paying tribute to Keshab Chander Sen. For he was not only one of the great men of India and of the Nineteenth Century, but also one of the great men of the world, and of all time. As one of the representatives of a group of free churchmen in America, I have travelled many thousands of miles to participate in the celebration of the centenary of the Brahmo Somaj and to take part in commemorating the incomparable service to the world that has been rendered by Keshab Chander Sen and his associates. I am impressed by the increasing reverence in which he is held in India as it becomes clearer that the road to national greatness which he pointed out is the road along which India must proceed if she attains national greatness. I have taken part in

centenary celebrations in which many others as well as Brahmos have participated, in ten of the leading cities of North India, and everywhere the name of Keshab has been spoken with profound admiration and reverence.

It may not be known to all of you here that for more than half a century that name has been revered in America as well as in India. This morning I was given the privilege by my friend, Mr. Jamini Koar, of reading copies of correspondence recently discovered by him in the Imperial Library, between Keshab and the Rev. William J. Potter of New Bedford, Massachusetts, carried on over sixty years ago. Mr. Potter was for many years the secretary of the Free Religious Association of America, an offshoot of the National Unitarian Conference which no longer maintains a separate existence. It was for Mr. Potter an event of the great magnitude to learn through Rev. Charles Hall, a Unitarian missionary in India, that Keshab, a native product of Indian thought and religion, was preaching ten thousand miles away, with eloquence and power in a non-Christian land, the same gospel that the Free Religious Association was proclaiming in America. On making this discovery Mr. Potter sent Keshab the cordial greetings of the Association, and I venture to quote a few sentences from Keshab's reply.

"Now that we are rejoicing," he wrote "in the light vouchsafed to us by the merciful God, we have begun to feel the heavy responsibility attached to it of extending its blessings to other lands. At such a

time the clearing intelligence communicated by your similar labour and achievements in America serves to strengthen our hands, to increase our joy and faith and hope a hundredfold. We now feel as we have never felt before, that God's religion shall spread throughout the length and breadth of the world, destroying all false sects and creeds and uniting all nations in one universal brotherhood ; and it affords us inexpressible delight that the noble American people have come forward with us in having the way for the future church of the world..... India and America, the East and the West, are to sing henceforth with united hearts, and in one harmonious and willing chorus, the glory of the Supreme Creator."

Years later the news came to America that Keshab Chander Sen was dead. He had never visited America, but became widely known there, especially in the East, and a memorial meeting held in Boston under the auspices of the Free Religious Association, was largely attended. At this meeting men of prominence in the religious world, of various denominations, recorded their grief at his untimely taking-off and the sense of loss experienced not only by literal but also by orthodox Christianity at the time, is indicated by these words written by the late Joseph Cook : " a heroic soldier of religious reform, a saint, a seer, has passed into the world into which all men haste.....O my brother, my brother, how lonely the world seems without thee ! "

At the time of Keshab's death Phillips Brooks, the greatest preacher America has produced, was preaching in Trinity Church of Boston. Though he could not attend the memorial service he wrote of the recent occasion on which he and Keshab met. I should like to have been present at the interview of them, two mighty men of God, when the great preacher of the Orient and the great preacher of the Occident stood face to face and conferred together, it may be presumed, about the realities of the unseen world : both of them young, tall, and handsome, both striking personalities, both passionately eager to realize the kingdom of God in the human life of their own generation.

It is not likely that the influence of Keshab or the memory of his work will soon disappear from American minds and hearts. It is only a few days ago that a letter which reached me from Chicago informed me of a service at the Meadville Theological School Chapel on November 19th last at which Miss Ghosh of Calcutta, head of the Victoria Institution, and Professor Hutcheon, had spoken in commemoration of Keshab's birthday.

As I have studied the life of the illustrious founder of the Brahmo Somaj, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, I have been more and more impressed by its resemblance in several outstanding ways, to the life of Dr. William Ellery Channing, the leader of the Unitarian movement in New England. But if Ram Mohan Roy was the Channing of the Brahmo Somaj, I am equally sure that

Keshab was its Theodore Parker. In one of his letters the Rev. Charles Dall tells of putting a volume of Parker's sermons into Keshab's hands. Though the main lines of Keshab's thought had been already worked out independently by himself, this volume was seed cast upon fertile soil, for, although the two men never met, they were spiritually akin. If there were time, I should like to indicate in detail the ways in which this was so. But I can only give the barest outline of what I should like to say.

They were alike in the first place, in the catholicity of their minds. Neither was willing to accept as authority for the religious life any sacred document of the past for which reason and conscience were not the final test.

In the second place, both of these men were preachers of extraordinary power and personal magnetism, and did more than any other men of their time, by their eloquence and fearlessness, to popularize the liberal gospel.

In the third place, both Keshab and Parker believed in God not only with the intellect but also with the heart. Both of them were men of prayer. Both left published prayers behind them instinct with the attitude of mystical devotion. Keshab belongs in his religious thinking with the modernists of the twentieth century. In the deep faiths of the heart he was one with Thomas A. Kempis, St. Francis of Assissi, and mystics of every age. I am convinced that much of Keshab's influence sprang from the little group of

disciples that gathered about him in that shrine on Upper Circular Road, in prayer.

And more than in any other way did Keshab resemble Theodore Parker in the fact that with his religious faith there was inextricable fund of a passion for social reform. As was Parker's hatred of the subjection of the Negro in slavery, so was Keshab's hatred on the subjection of women through unjust marriage laws and other evil institutions inherited from the past. With splendid courage both these men declared war against all customs and institutions which stood in the way of human freedom and the perfection of human personality. Parker did not live to witness the emancipation of the slave. But he played a leading part in the winning for humanity of this great boon. Keshab did not win in his short span of years the complete emancipation of his race or his country. But he set in motion agencies and forces which slowly but surely are attaining this sublime consummation of his hopes. May we not thank God tonight for his magnificent courage, his passionate faith, his quenchless zeal.

—*Navavidhan, February 21 & 28, 1929.*

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### KESHAB AS A PATRIOT (T. L. VASWANI)

Keshab was a patriot in the deepest sense of that word. He believed in the soul, the over-soul of his nation.

He loved India in the new wreckage of her ancient splendour.



He paid homage to her Glory, the Glory that men in the dim twilight of primeval history,—the Glory immortalised in her ancient Literature and Art.

He found that Glory enveloped by centuries of decadence.

He felt that India could not be great again until she recouped her long-lost loyalty to the great ideals built within her soul.

He deemed it essential to organise a movement of Reconstruction and Regeneration.

Hence his efforts to uplift Indian womanhood, to evolve a scheme of new education to spread the message among the intelligentsia and the masses, to blend the wisdom of Buddha and Jesus with the Ancient Wisdom of the Rishis.

Keshab's life was creative, for Keshab realised his kinship with the Cosmos and worshipped the God-in-all !

—*Navavidhan*, November 21, 1929.

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## AS OTHERS SEE US

*Fifty years of Navavidhan.*

The church of the New Dispensation founded by Brahmanand Keshab Chander Sen celebrates its Golden Jubilee in the year 1930. It will also celebrate the centenary of the Brahmo Somaj at the same time. We have received a small leaflet from the secretaries of the Jubilee-Centenary Committee, which we hope to print in the next issue of the Patrika. One significant fact which the leaflet mentions is that "with the advent

of the ministry of Brahmanand Keshab Chander Sen began the emphasis on direct prayer and aradhana (Adoration). Instead of God being referred to in the third person, He came to be addressed in the second person. This was an important step forward in the evolution of the Upasana of Navavidhan. Realisation of such direct relationship led inevitably to the idea of dispensation (God seeking man) and to the facts of communion with God and reception of Adesh (Divine Command) from Him. These fundamental spiritual experiences have led to all the manifold thoughts, sentiments and activities that have gained recognition as Navavidhan." What the New Dispensation under the guidance of Brahmanand Keshab Chander Sen contributed to the spiritual life of the Brahmo Somaj is direct prayer and in our view it is by far the most vital thing in the life of the Brahmo Somaj. We hope that Jubilee celebration will bring men and women to a new appreciation of the life and work of Keshab Chander Sen.

—*Subodh Patrika.*

—*Navavidhan, November 28, 1929.*

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## Chapter IV

### THE BRAHMO SOMAJ OF INDIA LED BY BABOO KESHUB CHUNDER SEN WITH FACTS, HISTORICAL AND PERSONAL

(C. H. A. DALL, M.A.)

Friends of truth ; Brothers in Theism ; My Fellow  
Brahmos ; Believers in One God, our Father ; Ladies  
and Gentlemen,—

In the course of history and Providence, England has come to India. Come for what purpose : come to do what ? Not her own will, but the will of Him that sent her here. He who makes even the wrong and wroth of man to praise Him, will see to this India needs certain elements of true life to make her glad and strong. She needs more of feeling and force. She must, somehow, supplement her subtilty of intellect, and excess in worship, with energy and enterprise, on the one hand, and with public spirit and united strength on the other. Already she begins to know this. Timidly as she is wont to shrink and cower before the Englishman when too fiery and too forceful, till she begins to see the worth of his warm heart and his firm will, as absolutely needed to make a man. She knows she cannot possess the kingdom of proper manhood, till she makes her own these new and divinely-offered gifts of God's love and power. She is willing to be

taught them roughly if taught well. Have them she surely must, in due time. She will not always be full of fears and factions, and of consequent disunion and inability. One thing for which England has come to India, is the providence of God, is that she may bring her best life, her religion, into contact—I do not say conflict—with India's life, India's religion. For more than half a century she has done this. And done it mainly, perhaps, through her sustained appeals to the young and freshly budding life of India, in schools and colleges throughout the land. India has fed on Addison and Cowper, Milton and Shakespeare, Scot, Franklin, Longfellow, and George Stephenson, till she has caught something of the force and fire of the West. Differently as men may reckon up and estimate this result, there is today no inquiry of deeper interest to observant and thinking men than the question—what has really come of their jointure, the first, best fruit of the contact of these two lives is a new Theism. It is Brahmoism. You hear it confessed, with hardly a dissenting voice, that Western thought in Eastern life has produced the Brahmo Somaj of India: the parliament of Theists in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, and all over this land,—with a cry but, without a creed,—which excludes no manly man who believes in one Living God the Father; and sees that all the children of this One Father must needs be brothers and sisters. Yes: Christian England's more than fifty years training of so-called "heathen" India has not been in vain. England and India have lived long

enough together in intellectual and religious wedlock to have issue—to have legitimate and healthy offspring. I say let them rejoice together, and sing the birthday anthem—"to us a child is born." That child, I repeat, is the free, catholic, theistic church—God's church (Brahmo, God ; Somaj, church)—the Brahmo Somaj. Its most hopeful school of disciples today, as I see it, is that progressive and undogmatic band of men, which at present rejoices in the leadership and self-devotion of Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen. I say this after a personal acquaintance with him of full fifteen years ; as one not ignorant of his deficiencies, but daily thanking God for his virtues—a man born, not with English or American birth gifts and opportunities, but a child of Hindooism, and a native of Bengal. What else can we say of his recent enthusiastic reception to the homes and hearts, and even pulpits, of differing denominations of Christians in England,—what else could have given him this welcome, but this true patriotism, and sincere labor to bring light to the Hindoo, millions that sit in darkness around him ?

If you ask for my seconders in this conviction, namely that this so-called God's Church—this Brahmo Somaj—is a good and hopeful child of the joint life of England and India, here they are. Look in for a moment at the Allahabad Missionary Conference, which, not long since, gathered together nearly a hundred and fifty men of observation, thought and study from all parts of India. All of them, bear in mind, were orthodox Christian preachers. What say they

of this child, this infant church, this Brahmo Somaj of India ? Here, first, is Dr. Jardine, of the Established Church of Scotland, and here next is Dr. Murray Mitchell, of the Free Church. Dr. Jardine was asked by the Conference to read a paper on the Brahmo Somaj. He did so : and in the course of it (page 6, of the pamphlet edition) the Rev. R. Jardine, B.D., Sc.D., remarked that, "In this movement, there is undoubtedly much which the Christian Church can approve, and, for which we ought to be thankful. It appears to be, to a very great extent, the result of the influence of Christianity upon Hindooism. It may not be such a result as we could wish to see. But if it be such a result as God, in His wisdom, has seen fit to permit, are we not bound to recognise it as being, in its time and place, good ? And here, as I am under promise to deal " with facts, historical and personal," let me add what Dr. Jardine gave the Conference touching the relation of your lecturer to the Brahmo Somaj of India. He said—' The Rev. C. H. Dall, a Unitarian Missionary of Calcutta, being without doubt, desirous of bringing the Brahmo body nearer to Christ, became himself a member of the Somaj ; calling himself as, indeed, he always had a right to be called, a Christian Theist. From his position, however, the leader of the Somaj decidedly shrank ; and wished it to be distinctly understood that he was not a Christian Theist, but a Pure Theist, thus denying the connection, of what he (Keshub Baboo) believes to be the true principles of religion, with the person and life of Christ. The prominent

members of the Somaj thus shrink, not only from Christianity, but from the position of their great leader, Raja Ram Mohun Roy. What may be the final issue of affairs, time only can tell.

The Rev. Dr. Murray Mitchell, of long and ripe experience, in different parts of India, also testified, in the Conference, that the Brahmo Somaj was doing "very important service" to the cause of God. He says (page 12 of Dr. Jardine's pamphlet) that "Dr. Jardine's paper was a very fair and temperate statement of the character and the position of the Brahmo Somaj. The Somaj was, in some points, doing very important service. It contended earnestly against polytheism and caste. It contended no less earnestly against a system, that morally was more ruinous even than polytheism, namely pantheism :—a dreadful creed, that had eaten out the heart and soul of India. The Brahmos also strove against Comptism with all their might. Then the social reforms which the Somaj was struggling for, were of the greatest consequence. As a matter of simple justice, let all these things be frankly acknowledged, and heartily commended. Some seemed to think that, because the Somaj was so grievously far wrong in regard to the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, they should not be praised for any thing they did. With that view (Dr. M. Mitchell said) he had no sympathy. And assuredly the coldness, or severity often, with which they are treated, had repelled them from Missionaries and Christian influence." Dr. Mitchell proceeded to say of the Progressive Somaj (which is

reported as numbering 60 or 70 of their 100 Churches) that "it could hardly go back.....The great Ram Mohun Roy, for he really deserved that epitaph, founded it as a strictly monotheistic society, drawing its principles largely from the Christian scriptures." "Its eminent leader (Keshub Chunder Sen) had burnt his ships, and retreat was impossible. Would the Progressive Somaj advance till it blended with the Christian Church ? He believed that many of its members would do so. But perhaps not soon."

It may also be stated that the tone of the *American* Unitarians towards this new Church is quite as cheering as that of their English co religionists. A recent American letter from a prominent Unitarian to their missionary in Calcutta, says, "I believe that the Brahmo movement is a real manifestation of the favour of God to India ; and must lead at length to virtual Christianity. At least I find, in Sen's teaching, a wonderful transcript of the Gospel of Christ. You did a brave thing in hailing the descent of the spirit upon the Gentiles ;—a thing no other missionary dared to do.—Yours, &c.—G. L. C. Another occupant of a leading Unitarian pulpit in Boston, U. S. A., has written to Mr. Dall :—"I thank you that you never doubted my sympathy in your eminently judicious step in joining the Brahmo Somaj. From the first moment I have expressed my unqualified approval of it, in public and in private ; and I have yet to meet the first person who, with a knowledge of the truth, disapproves of it —Always truly yours E. E. H.



In the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word shall be established. I have therefore added two voices from among eminent Trinitarians, to my own testimony, that the unprejudiced among my hearers may rest, with me, in the conviction that this first-born of England and India is a good child, of fair promise, worthy to be nurtured hopefully, and not thrown to the wolves.

N.B.—While preparing this lecture for the Press, I see it stated in the *London Inquirer*, an organ of the Unitarians, June 1874, that the Brahmos "are our valued friends, carrying on, in perfect unity of spirit with us, substantially the same work."

## II

As, my friends, you have come here to listen to "facts historical and personal," in the rise of the Brahmoism of the new school, specially calling itself—though not yet altogether—"The Brahmo Somaj of India" led by Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen, let me here dismiss the Old School with very brief reference to Ram Mohun Roy and to Debendra Nath Tagore. The largest and most elaborate, as well as the ripest and latest work of the life and thought of Ram Mohun Roy, we have in octavo volume, in English, of more than six hundred and fifty pages. The title he gave it was—"The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to peace and happiness; extracted from the books of the New Testament, ascribed to the four Evangelists." These extracts fill less than a hundred pages, and give to all Hindoos a fair summary, in Bible language, of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The remaining five hundred pages of this masterly work are given to the exposition

and commendation of what Jesus said and did. In so many words, Ram Mohun Roy declares himself "a follower of Christ," and "a believer in him as the Son of God in a sense peculiar to him alone:" (page 157). He calls Jesus "the Founder of Truth and of True Religion;" "a being in whom dwelt all truth:" (page 147); the Spiritual Lord and King of Jews and Gentiles." He even goes so far, in his devout acceptance of the Gospel of Christ—seen of course, and read, by the light of his own conscience—as to urge its exclusive claims on awakening India, and to declare that in comparison with the "absurd and detestable modern Hindoo system of religion (page 317) it is the only way to God and heaven." "I conclude," says he (page 312) "with repeating my prayer that a day may soon arrive when every one will regard the precepts of Jesus as the sole guide to peace and happiness." I may add, that though I was but seventeen years old when Ram Mohun Roy died (in England), and never saw his face, except as engraved, or on canvas, such Christian writings, and such a life as his being those of a born Hindoo, were largely instrumental in bringing me to India, nearly twenty years ago.

Now, a word or two of Baboo Debendra Nath Tagore, also a native of Bengal, and the earliest organizer of the religious movement initiated by Raja Ram Mohun Roy. You quite understand that the progressive Brahmos have separated from Debendra Nath Tagore, as too conservative for them. Every movement of reform among honest men has, as inevitably as

honestly, its minds radical and conservative. The time comes when these can no longer live as one, and they branch out and separate from each other. The conservatives then grow more conservative, and the radicals more radical. At the present time Baboo Raj Narain Bose, for the conservatives, pleads that "Hindooism is the best of all prevailing religions:" though few old Brahmins would recognise his Hindooism as orthodox. This Adi Somaj, or old School of Brahmoism, issued a pamphlet not very long ago, showing up Keshub Chunder Sen as "the great apostle of Christianity in the East." On first visiting Debendra Nath Tagore in 1855, I asked him whether he ever allowed the name of Jesus to be heard in his church. "No, never," he replied. "And why not?" I said. He answered, "because some people call him God." If some people call you God, would that justify me in removing you from the list of my friends, or casting out your name as evil? I do not remember his rejoinder, except that he refused most positively to allow the name of Jesus, good or bad, to be heard in his church. And this statement, seemingly of prejudice rather than principle, made nearly twenty years ago, was but too prophetic of the subsequent declension of that elder branch of the Somaj.

I cannot well omit one other fact in the personal history of that evidently sincere conservative, Baboo Debendra Nath Tagore. The occurrence is too widely known to need elaborate statement. Suffice it to say, that more than three years ago, the progressive or "Brahmo Somaj of India" sought for peace and union

with the conservatives. Relying on the injunction of their common founder, Ram Mohun Roy, who positively forbade that any name held in reverence in any religion, should ever be ill spoken of in his church of God, Keshub Chunder Sen and his friends invited Debendra Nath Tagore to come and discourse to the two churches as one—the old and the new together—with a view to make peace. In his zeal for a purified Hindooism as the best of all religions, and hatred of Christian man-worship, the good Debendra Nath so far forgot the injunction as to denounce to his face the Christianizing leader of the progressive school, and declare the small but creditable chapel, or Mandir, which Keshub had succeeded in erecting, and on whose *Bedi* Debendra Nath then sat, to be a Christian scarecrow ; or as the *Mirror* reported it, a "Terror of Christ." Well : the progressive saw it was vain to cry "peace" where there was no peace. So they and conservatives turned back to back, and seem farther apart now than ever. With these all too brief allusions to the antecedents of "The Brahmo Somaj of India" with Ram Mohun, the founder, and his first organizer Debendra Nath, let me come at once to that Somaj or Theistic Church, which deserves and receives by far the larger share of public attention,—because it is alive and at work ; because it grows, however slowly, and means to grow.

Of Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen. I can say, without fear of contradiction, that an excellent spirit is in him. It may help to define our relative positions—his and mine—If I say, first, that he is not much older than my

son, William H. Dall ; and, secondly, that from the time he was a college undergraduate—both his home and mine being in Calcutta—I have done my best to cheer, instruct and help him. I have told him, and he has published it over India, that " Life is one continued growth of heavenward enterprise ; " that " All religion is life, and all life is growth ; " so that every religion, especially the most ancient, must grow or perish. It must accept Now the fresh inspiration of the Almighty ; which, to-day, as ever, gives true intuitions, the holy spirit, the proper Christ of Love, Faith, Wisdom and Power to all that ask Him,—and ask by his own discoverable and appointed methods—of affection, Prayer, Study, and Work. I have often given him such thoughts as these, which come to me out of the Bible of Hebrew Theism, and its last distillation, in the Theism of Jesus. Keshub Baboo gratefully encouraged me to bring him my best thoughts and principles,—with manly freedom from prejudice against the person, or the record, through which our Father sent them from heaven into the world.

Yes : I have good reason to know something of the fidelity and mental struggles of my friend, through which he has conquered the position he now holds, in the estimation of all that know him ; the position of a gentleman, a scholar, a lover and speaker of truth, and a worthy servant of the Living God. A Christian Missionary, present I think, at this moment, regards Keshub Baboo as " a poor, ignorant heathen," and yet " nearer to Christ " than myself. Well, it may be that both he and I love truth better than the best known

*system* of Truth ; and try to love God even better than the Bible; and the spirit of Christ better than "orthodox" Christianity. Let God be Judge.

To return to our "facts historical and personal." I was walking down Dhurumtollah Street, Calcutta, the other day, and seeing an aged Brahmin, with a look of refinement on his face, I readily fell into conversation with him. As all good Brahmins are, he was a man of peace, and wished well to all the world. He did so, at least, until I chanced to ask him what he thought of the Brahmo Somaj. "A bad thing," he said, (speaking English), "very bad ; Keshub Chunder Sen drink brandy, and lie all night in the street." *Aha* said I, "how do you learn that ? Did you ever see him lying in the street ?" "No, I never saw him" was the reply, "but that is what every body says." "I know him well" said I, "and both he and I are born teetotallers. We never drink brandy ; so my friend, please do not repeat that foolish charge. You would not knowingly bear false witness against your neighbour." So some orthodox Hindoos talk of my friend Keshub.

One occasion, if not the first, on which I gladly came to the defence of Keshub Baboo, was at the Presidency College, I think in the year 1868. He was then an under-graduate. He was a secretary of student's union, which they called "The British India Society." It was characteristic of Hindoo youth, as it would hardly have been of students English or American, to find God, Religion, Prayer, their one subject of deepest and most general interest. This you will clearly discover in the facts I am about to give you. I recall, as if it occurred

last night, the whole scene. Here on the platform, sit three *Padrees* : invited, among others, by that society of about 45 Collegians to sit with them in council. Our wellknown laborer for the perishing ones, "the masses" in India, Rev. James Long was chairman with Padree Burne, chaplain to the Lord Bishop, on his right, and Padree Dall, the Unitarian Christian, on his left. Padree Long calls the assembly to order ; the proceedings of the last meeting are read and approved ; and near a hundred of us are ready for business. Promptly rises Keshub Baboo, with the following resolution—Resolved that this society cultivate habits of prayer. "Why Keshub," says the broad faced genial chairman, "what do you mean ? Pray ? You can't pray. You've no God. Unless you pray to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost—the Holy Trinity,—Your prayer is nothing Move something more practicable." There was a pause. A look of surprise and disappointment rested on Keshub's handsome face. He raised his eyes to the platform as if hardly believing that *that* was to be the end of his appeal for what seemed so natural, so elevating, and so good to do ; especially for young men, including many of his class mates, who had, by the force of English education, out of Christian books dragged their anchors clean away from Hindooism and were likely, in the first gale, to be driven upon a lee shore. Lay hold on God, by faith and prayer ? No : there was nothing in it. It could not be done, except in the orthodox, trinitarian way. Padree Burne looked into Keshub's appealing eye ; but sat still. and said

nothing. So Padree Dall came to his feet. "Now listen to brother Dall;" said the smiling chairman; "he is only a Mahomedan, and can't hurt you." "My dear Keshub, be of good courage. One God created us, and He forgets nothing that He has made. We have all one Father, even God; and we, who love Jesus, and want you all to love him as he deserves to be loved, know that Jesus said, God gives His holy spirit to them that ask Him. The effectual asking is not according to any one theory of His nature, but according to your own heart's sincerity and need. Feel that *need* deeply, and then says Jesus—"Every one that asketh, receiveth." I decidedly approve your resolution, and shall be glad to hear it discussed and carried." That desire to accommodate and please all parties which makes the Hindoos, at least of Bengal, the politest people in the world, moved Keshub to modify the form of his resolution, so that it should read—"Resolved that the members of this society cultivate habits of devotion." This was condemned by good Padree Long as no better than the other; and the matter dropped.

### III

As showing the heart of truth in the work that sincere Hindoo-born young men of progress—I call them all Brahmos—are trying to do. I give you the resolution which followed that "to cultivate habits of prayer." I cannot give you the very words, but its purpose was—"Resolved that we will lose no opportunity of purifying our home scriptures; and of expunging and blotting out, in particular, such obscene passages



as are likely to be heard by our wives, sisters and female relatives. The name of the proposer, I think, was Nullit Bullub Sen. And even at this distance of time, I dare not go into particulars further than to say that one member of the society that passed this resolution was so severely chastised at home for his attempt to carry it out, that he sickened under it and died a few months afterwards. He died, as I see it, a martyr to the call of God—"Be ye holy for I am holy."

Let instances like this convince the timid, the narrow and suspicious that Brahmoism is not all talk. Although in the vigour and prime of early manhood, my good brother Keshub has already sacrificed his health, more than once to excessive labor. I am not now criticising his methods, convinced as I am that they are conscientious ; but honouring his spirit, his devotion of heart and will. A prayer meeting, sixteen hours long—what would you say to that ? I refer to a service devotional in its character, which filled one of the eight or ten meeting days, not of the last Annual Conference, Calcutta, but a preceding one. On that day Keshub held a single service extending from six o'clock in the morning to ten o'clock at night, sixteen hours during which he left the *Bedi* (pulpit) but twice, for rest, food and nourishment. No human frame could long carry on its work at this rate, and within a week he was dangerously ill with brain fever, and with more than one English physician attending on him to save his life. Some one says that true Christianity is self-denial for others' good. Do you see nothing of it here ?

You are aware that of Keshub's sixty public addresses in England, about forty have been printed in a volume by one of his London friends, Miss Collet—a five rupee volume, entitled "K. C. Sen's English Visit." To err is human, and he would have been more than human had all his words been words of wisdom. The interest excited, not only in men like Dean Stanley, of Westminster Abbey, but in the mind even of England's Queen, needs no further remark.

On the 5th May 1866, Keshub gave us his noted lecture on "Jesus Christ: Europe and Asia;" and, in September of the same year, another lecture on "Great Men." Some of my Christian brethren consider the second as a recoil, a drawing-back from position taken in the first regarding the honor due to Jesus. For myself, I see no drawing back, no after-thought of depreciation: but rather an increase of reverence to Jesus Christ. In opening the first discourse of the two, Keshub calls Jesus "the greatest and truest Benefactor of mankind;" and says that by the might of his self-denying faith, "He triumphantly established the Kingdom of God:" adding "Verily he was above ordinary humanity." Having thus set Him forth superlatively, as of all great men the greatest, he says (on page 8) in the second of two lectures, "Great men are created with a nature superior to that of others. They are not made great by culture of experience; they are born great..... It is God's light makes them shine, and enables them to illuminate the world. He puts into their very constitution something that is superhuman

and divine. If a prophet is not God, is he a mere man ? That cannot be.....As I said, He is both divine and human. He is both God and man. He is a God man. He is an incarnation of God.....God in man." I need not say that no Unitarian Christian could call Jesus a God-man. Some of our able divines, like Burnap, have also fought bravely against calling him an Incarnation of God. But my point, now, is not Keshub's seeming to be more orthodox in his "Great Men" than are some honest Christians. All I wish to say here and now, is, that laying these two best known discourses of Keshub's together, the second seems rather an advance than a recoil and retraction of honor from Jesus Christ.

Facts can hurt no man's feeling, for they are God's own ; and must be so while God is the chief doer in all that is well done. Let me, therefore, point you, briefly, to two facts of recent occurrence in Calcutta, in response to the question—how the Progressive Brahmos are getting on ? Most of us know that, in that city—the Paradise of Brahmos—an attempt has been made to re-organise their social and domestic life on a basis, and in ways, if not of the Christian home, with its beautiful yet legitimate freedom,—still, on a plan not Hindoo, but far in advance of it. As an escape from the bondage and miseries of the zenana, it is called the Refuge, or the Retreat. Such is the meaning or the name they have given it. The Bharat Asram. Asram, you know, means protection ; and Bharat is the ancient name of India. The Asram

was first opened on the 5th February 1872, in commodious quarters in the Presidency College Square. Early in the present year, such had been the increase of numbers that still larger quarters were required ;—some sixty Brahmos, including children, residing there if I mistake not, at this time. They now occupy the almost palatial house and grounds recently vacated by the hospital of the St. Vincent's Home. Here, then, you have one evidence of the health and growth of Brahmoism ; understanding that either Keshub Baboo himself, or his deputy, holds, at the Asram, for all its inmates, as for a single family, a daily religious service of some two hours duration. Now, one might suppose that, on their giving it up, their first occupied building would pass into other hands. Not so. And my second cheering fact is their present devotion of this, the old building, in Hindoo College Square to a students' home a Nikatun. The location of the building suits young men who like to board near the University College and here are some thirtyfive or forty of them, glad to reside in the Nikatun, and gather every morning to devotional services conducted by Keshub, or one of the approved Brahmo Missionaries. Give the two institutions—The Asram and the Nikatun—their proper value, and I cannot but think you will find in these two successes—not to mention others—substantial signs of the progress of Brahmoism. I must not close without telling you how I came myself to be a Brahmo.

For several successive years before my name appeared in the Mirror as a free and accepted member of

the Brahmo Somaj of India, a brothers' controversy had gone on, in correspondence between Keshub and myself, with nothing but mutual respect and good feeling on both sides, from first to last. I then said, and now say, that it is yet too soon for Brahmoism—this movement of the spirit of God over the dark waters of India's faith—to bind its thought to fixed dogmas and a settled creed. Such a creed would be a think-no-further a covenant not to grow ; while true religion is life ; and true life is growth. Not a creed I say but a cry. Did not the timely cry of " No Popery " once save England from relapsing into Romanism ? Did not the cry, " No union with slave holders ! " emancipate, in America, four millions of slaves ? Yes : There is power in a cry. So I went for a cry—not a creed—for Brahmoism. " God our Father, Man our Brother," something of that sort, destructive of atheism, polytheism, pantheism, caste, and etc. Keshub went for a creed not a cry. It was impossible for me to join the Brahmos under any creed that even their Christian spirited leader could draw up. No Unitarian Christian would sign a creed, other than the Lord's Prayer. (Colonel Newhall speaking from the audience—" But have the Brahmos not well defined doctrines ? as given in the pamphlet you lent me ? Dr. Jardine's ") With thanks for this inquiry allow me to say that, as individuals they have : but, as a body, their intellectual horizon is unbounded. Accepting the best thing of the Bible, and of all other widely revered Scriptures, according to conscience and common sense ; i.e., as they

feel them to be good and see them to be true, under the guidance of the ever present and ever living and all inspiring God ;—Brahmos have no list of articles for their members to sign. I would not wish them to be bound in *thought*, even to the teachings of Ram Mohun Roy. " Know the Truth " says Jesus, " And the truth shall " not bind you, but—" Make you free." In God you must confide. Man you must love. Heart and Soul are *bound* to love and trust the good and right. And just as these are bound, the Mind and Will are *free*—free to think, and free to act. I cannot think your thought: you cannot do my work,—these principles underlie all true religion.

#### IV

Well, how came I to be a Brahmo? Let me tell you. The Directress of the woman side of our Unitarian Mission a true woman, Miss Mary Chamberlain, dropped in with me at the Mirror office—it may be a couple of years ago—to ask Keshub about the success of his school for Hindoo girls. We had finished our errand, and were about to leave, when Keshub, in presence of perhaps a dozen Brahmo friends, said, "Mr. Dall, you cannot say that *we* have kept you out of the Brahmo Somaj?" "Who has then" I replied. "Have I not suggested cry after cry, without finding one to please you? In rejecting them as the sufficient bound of Brahmoism, you reject me." "See here, Mr. Dall," said Keshub, "Will you sign this?" "Sign what?" I asked. "That you and we are Theists!" "Most gladly," I said, "you have condensed the cry

into a single word—Theism ! I'll sign it forty times." *Theism* is a term large enough to stand for Godism and Godliness and what more do we want ? *Theism* is broad enough to meet man's highest aspirations :—a word that may be, if we make it so, the all inclusive name for true religion. So Keshub handed me to sign, what his pen then freshly wrote, namely, the words—I avow my faith in Theism; and become a member of the Brahmo Somaj of India. My judicious colleague stayed my pen in protest that I was too much of a Christian to stand among the Brahmos; and to remind me of the wide misunderstandings that would arise from such an act, to the injury of my mission, particularly in America. I protested in return, that Providence had now brought me to an opportunity I had long been watching for : and that I must not let slip. No, I would trust in God to heal the misunderstandings in His own time and way. Was anything worth doing ever done without being misunderstood and misrepresented ? Never. So, calling on the witnesses, now increased to 20 or 30, to remember that, with Ram Mohun Roy, I was a staunch "follower of Christ" and hearing Baboo Protap Chunder Mozoomdar at my right hand say, "so are we all : we are all followers of Christ," I signed myself a believer in One God, the Father—a Theist; and the next issue of the Mirror gave out my name as an enrolled member of the Brahmo Somaj of India; not of Bengal alone, but of India. Now I think you have the whole story.

One word more as to Brahmo doctrines. Some of my hearers, I think, believe the hour has not yet come

for fixing this new-born spiritual life in an outward form that altereth not. Be it clearly understood that Brahmoism is not the Greek Theism of selfish Zeus,—nor even the far nobler Hebrew theism of a localised or “jealous” Jehovah ;—but is the world embracing theism of Christ. “One is your Father, and all ye are brothers ;” that exhaustive and ultimate theism of Jesus, “Whosoever does the will of God, the same is my brother, sister, mother.” This being so, I am with them to help lift up their banners. I stand by them to expose their errors and warn them from any turning aside to Baal, while I cry courage to their very tentative effort towards the good and true and right.

As a Christian theist, I cannot blame them for making Christ's very words their creed ; even when he says “Why thou callest me good ; there is none good but One, that is God.” I cannot blame Keshub when he dissents, even from Ram Mohan Roy's saying that Jesus personally judges all men “I readily admit,” says the good Ram Mohun, “the correctness of the position that His heavenly Father has committed to Jesus the final judgment of all who have lived since the creation ; and that both the authority and the ability to judge are gifts bestowed on the Son by the Omnipotent Father.” Can you blame our friend Keshub for appealing, from this more physical view of the final judgment, to that more spiritual one, given us by St. John, as in the very words of Jesus—“This is the judgment, this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than



light ! "Sin carries with it, for ever, its own punishment and its own penalty. And, again, in the very words of Jesus, according to John xii, 48 "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." God's truth, God's impartial and discoverable truth and right—that shall judge me and all men;—that, and nothing else.

Who can blame the Brahmos—certainly not I,—if they set high above our Christian theories of faith, what Jesus calls "The first of all the commandments of God ;" namely, the words, "Hear oh people, the Lord our God is ONE Lord ; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart ; And with all thy soul ; and with all thy mind ; and with all thy strength " (Mark xii, 29-31). "This is God's first commandment," says Jesus ; and the second is like it, namely this—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Make thyself a true, a God-like lover, believer, thinker, and worker, and thy fellow-man the same ; and that is Christianity : that is salvation ; that is absolute religion ; that is practical theism, godliness, man's perfection now and for ever, in spiritual resemblance, childhood, sonship to his creator ; who is Infinite love, Faithfulness, Wisdom, and Power. So, my Christian friends, and you, brother Brahmos, seek and speak the truth, and fear not. Hold to the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Be just and fear not. God lives. Be His side, and none can hurt you. When He is for you, who shall be against you ?—Farewell !\*

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\*This lecture was prepared at the special request of Bengali friends and printed by them. It was delivered in Nynce Tal June 1874 and was printed at the Calcutta Central Press Company, Ltd., 1874.

NOTE—Every good Christian, every generous man is glad to discover in the great Indian Shastur, the Mahabharat, amidst some things dark and earthly, gems of light like the following, " Truth is the constant religion of the virtuous. Truth is the religion eternal. Bend always to the truth. Truth is the highest end. Truth is piety. Truth is the mortification of the flesh. Truth is divine communion. Truth is the Eternal God. Truth is the highest sacrificial observance. All is established in truth. It takes the name of nobleness when a man zealously does good to all, without any show, and in a dispassionate spirit. There is no religion higher than truth. There is no vice greater than untruth. Truth is the VEDA of religion. Therefore no truth should ever be extinguished. Set a single truth, against thousand ' Ashwamedha ' sacrifices ; that single truth outweighs them all..... So do thou be upright in spirit. The resolve to govern the body is human ; the resolve to be pure in heart is divine."

(National Paper, in controversy with the Friend of India, October 23rd, 1872.)

NOTE—The Old School Brahmos reject Polytheism, Pantheism, Asceticism, Caste, Idolatry and all the abominations of actual Hindooism. They stand on Theism pure and simple. They " declare the sovereignty of Reason ;" (page 22) " worship the One God of Nature and truth according to the dictates of common sense ;" honor the teachings of Ram Mohun Roy and offer the hand of fellowship to sincere religions of the world over :—yet, for this Catholic truth and liberty, prefer the name of Hindooism—(see Baboo Raj Narain Bose's Lecture ; Passion.)

—From the ' Navavidhan,' 21st and 28th June  
and 5th and 12th July, 1934.

## REV. MR. DALL'S LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE STATESMAN

(i)

Sir,

On Thursday night a well pleased audience nearly filled the one hundred and fifty chairs regularly provided

at the Dalhousie Institute. They came to hear our Keshub ; some for the first time. It was whispered about—though imperfectly advertised—that this pre-eminent Hindoo artist in English would improvise sketches of what the Christian missions were trying to do in India. Caricature is not his forte ; but that he was, in some sort, to give the foreigners a good wiggling was in the air. This he did. He did it gently, *suo more*, and devoutly. He did it politely and with becoming reverence. He did it handsomely and thoroughly. He has never had, in any of his orations, a completer triumph, in making the sharply taxed pay gladly, and with a—Yes, thank you, so be it, you are right. He did more than please his critical and select audience, not chiefly of ladies, but of men. He was several times interrupted with good Methodist *Amens* and clapping. And the address, of an hour and a quarter—well weeded and clean cut from beginning to end—was followed by the Chairman's hearty endorsement and assent.

This was the more remarkable as he realised his own antagonistic position from the outset. He knew he was expected to tell these foreigners, from all parts of India, what he considered to be their faults as missionaries—so he went bravely to work ;—very bravely for a born and mild and subject Hindoo addressing the ruling race. Gentlemen, he said, in effect you halt half way. You stop short at Jesus, and forget the Holy Ghost, the present God. Why do you fear to confess the Holy Spirit at work here among us ? Manifestly at work wherever and whenever we love and

do what is true and right ? Did not Paul say " Glory, honour and peace to every one that worketh good ? " Again, besides failing to recognise the good done by men who are not Christians, are you not careless of the fact that English education in India is turning the devout Hindoos into rationalists and infidels, and atheists, and sensualists ? Might you not do more to stay the circulation of a defiling and destructive literature now sent about India in cart loads,—to the sure ruin of many of her youth and university men ? In this connection Keshub made repeated use of the figure of which the precise bearing was clearer to himself than to some of his audience ; namely, *the girl of the period*. He thought there was quite too much missionary flirtation with her ;—and so on. Was it Darwinism ; or what was he driving at as " the girl of the period " ? The one fault which he specially emphasised was that of missionary devotion to secular education. He would have missionaries preach " the historic Christ " without teaching history. He would have " science," intuitional science without arithmetic, geometry or algebra. Here, and throughout the address, he stood on his old narrow ground of the sufficiency of the intuitions forgetting the extuitions. By the way it is noteworthy that, " that marvelous mystery of the trinity " which Keshub pleads for, as " a reality in consciousness " and a " self evident intuitional truth " (page 5, of Keshub's last Town Hall Lecture), has been more than once discredited and made secondary in the pending (trinitarian) Decennial Missionary conference. Yesterday (Friday), Dr. Scott gave

us his "three great points in the selection of native preachers,"—Morality first, theology second, and third, education. He said further more that they should preach "doctrines which come directly from the Bible, without trying to go into such mysteries as the trinity"; (of course according to the preacher's own version of it.)—"which leads to useless controversy." Rev. W. R. James of the Baptist (Calcutta) Mission, in addressing the Conference yesterday, pleaded that "the trinity should be less dwelt on." It gave the Hindoo and Muslim three Gods, etc. The word "Trinity was of man's invention, and was nowhere found in the Bible." This brave and honest freedom of the Conference, permitting such unpalatable statements (not without dissent), stands in singular contrast with the latest intuitions of Keshub Baboo and his apostles. He spoke also of science, at the Dalhousie, without making it clear that his meaning of the word "science" was on the narrow gauge of the intuitions, and so differed from the English use of it. He says (verbatim) that "the man of science realises his facts in his own inner consciousness" (page 4). Thus "reason develops into faith : and science speaks with indisputable authority of things invisible and intangible." "So that what we can not conceive in reflective consciousness we realise in intuitive consciousness." This deprecation of the use and need of books and facts, and denial of the study or science of the world outside of us, this we know is Buddhist, and is Hindoo, and so is Keshub's inheritance and birth-gift as a Hindoo. It is not

surprising that he thus exalts the intuitional and oriental, and depreciates the Baconian and occidental. It is, however, a little surprising that a large majority of his Audience (of occidental missionaries) should applaud to the echo Keshub's subordination of Christian culture at College, and of Christian nurture in the day and Sunday Scholar,—to prompt conversion by open-air preaching and the descent of the Holy Ghost. It is true that many of the missionaries endorse this idea with qualifications. To a man they believe in schools, Sunday and theological. Not as anywise necessary to make good Christians. Christians, the very best, are made in an hour; made by a single sermon in the street or the Bazar. Christianity first, then culture, if you like. Is it not odd to find popular Christianity and refined Hindooism thus at one? Occupying radically the same ground? And why? Because this ground was taken by those Asiatics who went out from the presence of Jesus to convert Greece and Rome, Messopotamia, and India. The argument, fair and square, is,—as Keshub gave it at the Dalhousie,—that as Paul and Thomas, the apostles, opened no schools, and simply looked for God the Holy Ghost to "fall on" believers, we should do the same. We can certainly do no better. Can we do no better? That is the question to which only a minority as yet are ready to say aye. Conservatism in principles with progress and improvement in methods, what say we to that? One answer we have in the very low condition of the two hundred Syrian Churches on the Malabar coast, converts (as many believe) of St. Thomas

the apostle. These men were converted simply by the Holy Ghost, and left to their intuitions for eighteen centuries. When shall we come to know that all religion is life,—and all true life—religion ?

(ii).

Such an audience as gathered at the Town Hall on Saturday to hear Keshub Chunder's "Message from Asia to Europe," was a glory of which he might well be proud. Is there another man in Calcutta who could have packed its largest auditorium as he did ? Is there another in India, short of the Viceroy, who could bring around him such a mass of intelligent and expectant listeners ? Even thoughtful English womanhood was there. Who but Keshub, could have won the refined, reserved fastidious English hearer to come and sit for two attentive hours, in the midst of two thousand natives ?—and in actual personal, elbowing contact with Asiatics with Hindoos ? Not only the *Creme de La Crene* of interested missionaries, like Dr. Murray Mitchell and Rev. Luke Rivington, were in that dense crowd, but men like General Walker, of the Asiatic Society, and others of non-missionary and scholarly sort. What brought Government officials into such personal contact with the subject masses ? What magnetizer, what sorcerer had caused this spell ?—Had drawn into his net this miraculous draught of men ; of people so far apart on all ordinary occasions ? It was only Keshub's talk. Why did they come to hear it ? The general idea has been, for some time past, both here and in England,

and America—to judge by the papers—that Keshub had somehow gone into his dotage. He had been shunted to a side track, out of the Brahmo Somaj. It was perfectly clear that the audience was no mob, asking what will this babbler say? It was such a cultured, earnest and reverent assembly as is rarely gathered in Calcutta. And he that could gather it and hold its unwearied attention as Keshub did, was no common man. Is it too much to say that a man of his religious life, and high spiritual and moral aims, is a jewel and a treasure to our city?

Well, what do you think of it? was on many lips, as the enormous audience began to disperse. "Keshub is more of a Christian than a Brahmo," said a thoughtful native gentleman, as we were rising to leave. "Do you believe all this?" said Dr. Murray Mitchell, evidently supposing that I did. "Yes and no," was the reply, "surely none but the bigot doctor, can help sympathising with the catholic aims of the speaker. The mischief is that he does not read that he knows no book but his own soul's intuitions. I have been waiting for some clear delineation of Keshub's eclecticism from out the ethnic religions. What is it that he accepts—out of Buddhism, Parsism, Islam etc., etc.? He does not tell us. I fear he cannot tell us, because he does not know. I believe Moham-mad when he says that "the knowledge of a thing is better than the ignorance of a thing." It will be a fearful discount for his church, if its leader does not think so. He speaks very bravely of "my Jesus." He again speaks of "my



Buddha." Not long since a leading article in Keshub's organ, said that "Buddhism collapsed in India centuries ago, on account of its atheism." Does 'my Buddha,' involve me in atheism? I hear no answer. There are a dozen such questions touching these so called religions which Keshub gives no answer. Why? Is it because he never studied these religions? Yes. And does he not mean to study them? No. And he leads his followers to believe that they need not study them? Yes. And is this teaching a deadly dry-rot in the very structure of his church? Yes. Did one of his chief apostles declare this to me three days ago—by saying, in Keshub's praise, "he never reads"? Yes. And did another now gone to heaven, say to the same question, put by me in Keshub's library, "Books sir? He has nothing to do with books; he reads himself." And did Keshub deny his God given extuitions (of study and work) in one of his annual orations in this very Town Hall—telling his audience that he "did not read two books in three hundred and sixty-five days?" He did. It is sadly true that he did. It is as sad to hear this as to be told of that chronic disease which for a year has been sapping Keshub's physical strength, and for three years has preyed upon that of his ablest supporter. The knowledge of this physical disability is not so sad as to know that reading is now repudiated by so large and cultured a man; perhaps the most consummate flower of the living blossoms of flowery Bengal; of Bengal not in her working and thinking life: but in her properly religious

life, and advance to a larger spirituality. Providentially, it was given me to read, almost daily for six or eight hours, from June to September last, in London, at the British Museum. There, in one of the best libraries of the world how I did wish that Keshub was at my side ;—Keshub, my personal friend from the time he was a youth in the Presidency College in 1855 ; my friend for twenty-seven years. I pored with delight over Bunsen's Egypt and Grote's Greece and the fourteen octavos of the ripest European scholarship, edited by Maxmuller, as " the sacred books of the East." Here were the chosen scriptures of Hinduism, Chinism, Parsism, Buddhism and Islam. and five contestants with Christianity for the palm of place and power. How can he talk of harmonising them without hearing what they say ? Is not such a call to unity with them, a unity which he knows not what ?—" It is beating that air, and leaving no mark ; leaving nothing that can abide, I can only say that those privileged four months of delightful reading and culling out the grains of gold from the dust heaps of the past, brought me something good. If the first step in wisdom is to begin to know how little you know I took my first step, that way, last Summer. Here you have Jesus the Worker (the bread-Winner of his family upto thirty years of age) and there Buddha the beggar ; beggar till he was eighty years of age Buddha made celibacy and the begging-bowl the very sacraments of his religion. And they are so to this day, to every full Buddhist. Is this your religion ? " To beg I am ashamed," are words that

Jesus put into the mouth of one whom he "commanded." Which, Keshub, do you command ? Both ? Is the unity you preach a unity of opposites ? A unity of light with darkness ? A unity of Christian theism with Buddhist atheism ? If not, tell us what you wish ; and what you mean. This was not done. The tones of his silver voice were clear and musical this year as ever. The speaker's marvelous command of a foreign tongue was as witching as ever. It was, as heretofore, a treat to hear such music, and such a mastery of speech. But the inevitable intellectual failure of arrested development was there. It was the same old song ; with not a new idea—except a few happy figures. Not a fact, nor an anecdote, nor a historic parallel, nor a budding of fresh thought, was there. God made all things to grow. Every accomplished fact of human progress is a new word of God that may not be ignored. What was said was worth hearing,—to such as had not heard it before. But most of us had. All said *amen* to its generous feeling and patriotic devotion, but old friends went away disappointed at its superficiality. They regretted its want of thoroughness and of scholarly tact. These faults must go along with those glories. He that loves my faults is in league with my enemies. I call not him my friend.\*

DALL.

—*From Navavidhan, 19th and 26th July, 1934.*

\* The two letters were published in an appendix entitled Mr. Dall's Relation to the Brahmo Somaj in a pamphlet entitled "What is Christianity ?" Calcutta, 1883

## Chapter V

### TWO DOCUMENTS—Reprinted.

[JAMINI KANTA KOAR]

Two original documents of supreme worth and importance are here, for the first time, *brought together* for the student of the Navavidhan. They are two avowals, made in the course of a short Divine Service, one by Maharshi Devendranath, the other by Keshub Chunder. The occasion was the welcoming, by the Tagore household, of Keshub with his wife who was brought over from her father's house at Bally, to attend the Maghotsav celebration of 1862. The service was called ("*atirikta*") supplementary or additional, and was held sometime late in the evening, in the inner apartments ("*antahpur*") of the Tagore House, before the womenfolk. The date is 11th of Magh, January 23, 1862. Devendranath's prayer is taken from a booklet "*Stutimala*," printed at the Sahas Yantra, Samvat 1919, and published by the Calcutta Brahmo Somaj. It was recovered by our Brother Sarat Kumar Mozoomdar, and published, along with an English translation, in the Navavidhan, February 18, 1926. Keshub's prayer, in answer to Devendranath's stirring welcome, perhaps his first recorded prayer in Bengali, will be found in Upadhyaya's "*Acharya Keshub Chandra*," Adi, Vol. I, p. 162-3. It comes to us as a surprise that Keshub's prayer has not been noticed by any one else. Inasmuch

as it contains a prophetic announcement of his own mission and destiny. (“অন্ত এই বঙ্গদেশের মধ্যে তাহার সূত্রপাত হইল”), it should be read as a sequel to Maharshi's prayer, evidently preceding it, which is a recognition of Keshub as being sent by God for (“পৃথিবীর উন্নতির জন্ত”) the uplift of the world. This recognition coming full three months before the formal recognition, on April 13, Bysack 1, as “Brahmananda” and “Acharya,” puts back the date of Keshub's coming out with his wife (from “অবরোধ”), not on April 13 but on 11th Magh, a date which, again and again, plays an important part in the life of Keshub. This is, perhaps, the first *Antahpur*\* service in the history of the Brahmo Somaj.

## I

## MAHARSHI'S PRAYER

১১ মাঘ ১৭৮৩ শক।

ব্রাহ্মধর্ম প্রচার বিষয়ে ঈশ্বরের কৃপা জন্ত ধন্যবাদ।

( অন্তঃপুর )

হে পরমাত্মন! তোমার যে অনুগত, তুমি তাহাদিগকে আশার অতীত ফল প্রদান কর। আমার যাহা আশা ছিল, তাহার অতীত ফল প্রদান করিয়াছ। প্রথমে আমি কেবল একেলাই তোমাকে পাইবার জন্ত ব্যাকুল থাকিয়া তোমাকে অন্বেষণ করিয়াছিলাম, অতঃপর জন্ত ব্যাকুলতা কিছুই ছিল না। তুমি আমার সেই তৃপ্তি আত্মাকে তোমার অমৃত বারিতে শীতল করিলে। যখনই সংতুষ্ট হইলাম, তখনই সেই অমৃত আবার অতঃপর নিকট প্রচার করিতে মন

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\*“এই উপাসনায় কেশবচন্দ্র এ সময়ে মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ হইতে তিনি ব্রহ্মানন্দ উপাধি প্রাপ্ত হইয়াছেন—প্রার্থনা করেন। তাহার তৎকালের প্রার্থনার ভাব প্রদর্শন করিবার জন্য উহা নিম্নে প্রদত্ত হইল।” আ: কে:, আদি, পৃ: ১৬২

উৎসুক হইল। আমি নিশ্চয় জানি যে, তোমার সেই গুরুভার বহন করিতে আমার কোন সাধ্য নাই, তথাপি না করিয়াই বা কি করি, আমার হৃদয়ে তুমি বারংবার এইটি উদ্বোধন করিতে লাগিলে যে, আমার এই অমৃত সলিল তুমি সকলকে পরিবেশন কর; আমি কি করি আমি ক্ষুদ্র, আমি কিরূপে এই ভার অত্কে উত্তোলন করিয়া দিব, অথচ দিতেই হইবে; আমি আপনি অবশ্য হইয়া তাবলোকেরই সহায়তা প্রার্থনা করিলাম, কাহারও নিকট হইতে প্রকৃত সাহায্য প্রাপ্ত হইলাম না, মনে হইল যে তুমি যে ভার আমাকে অর্পণ করিলে, তাহা বুঝি আমি সিদ্ধ করিতে পারিলাম না। তেমন সহায় পাইলাম না, তেমন কোন লোক পাইলাম না, আমি একেলা কিরূপে তোমার সেই গুরুভার বহন করিয়া অত্কে আশ্বাদন দিব, কাহাকেই বা দিব? অন্তরে জিজ্ঞাসা করিতে লাগিলাম, বল সে অগ্নি কোথায়, বুঝি তাহা বঙ্গদেশে প্রসৃত হইল না। হে অগ্নি! কেন তুমি আমার এই ক্ষুদ্র হৃদয় কোটরেই আবদ্ধ রহিয়াছ? তুমি উৎসের জ্বায় উচ্ছসিত হইয়া পড়, ভারত ভূমির মোহান্ধকার ও কলুষিত বায়ুকে বিনাশিত কর, পৃথিবীকে এক দাবানলময়ে আবেষ্টন কর। এই প্রকার আর্ন্তনিনাদে বক্ষস্থল আর্দ্র করিতে লাগিলাম; তুমি আশ্বাস দিলে ও কোমল হস্তে আমার অশ্রুজলমোচন করিতে লাগিলে। একদিন পরে তোমার প্রসাদে তোমার প্রেরিত সাধুজনকে দর্শন করিয়া আমার আশা বৃদ্ধি হইল। সেই সাধু যুবা যিনি অল্প আমার আশ্রয়ে সস্ত্রীক আসিয়া আমার গৃহকে উজ্জ্বল করিলেন, তাঁর সঙ্গে যতই সহবাস করি, ততই আমার আশা বৃদ্ধি হয়, ততই কৃতার্থ হই। তিনি, যিনি আমার পুত্র হইতেও প্রিয়তম, আমার অভিন্ন হৃদয়, এক হৃদয়, যিনি ঈশ্বরের পরিপূর্ণ ব্রহ্মানন্দ নিয়তই পান করিতেছেন। আমি যত লোকের সঙ্গে সহবাস করিয়াছি, এমত পবিত্র, এমত দৃঢ়ব্রত, এমত জ্ঞানালোকে ধর্ম্মবলে বিভূষিত ব্রহ্মপরায়ণ কোথাও দেখি নাই, তিনি আজ সস্ত্রীক হইয়া আমার গৃহকে উজ্জ্বল করিলেন।

প্রথমে কেবল আমি একেলাই ঈশ্বরকে প্রাপ্ত হইয়াছিলাম, এখন আমার উত্তরাধিকারী পুত্র, কন্যা, পুত্রবধূ, পৌত্র, প্রপৌত্র সকলেই

আমার ভাগের অংশ পাইবেন। প্রথমে ধর্মপ্রচারের প্রতি আমার কিছুমাত্র লক্ষ্য ছিল না, কিসে নিজেকে তোমাকে প্রাপ্ত হই, কিসে আপনাকে আমি পবিত্র করি, এই আমার পরম লক্ষ্য ছিল; কিন্তু যখনই তোমাকে লাভ করিয়াছি, তখনই আমার হস্ত তোমার স্নান পরিবেশন করিতে ব্যগ্র হইয়াছে। অমনি আমার জিহ্বা তোমার মহিমা ঘোষণা করিতে প্রবৃত্ত হইয়াছে। এক্ষণে হে পরমাত্মন, তুমি যে সাধু সজ্জনকে এই পৃথিবীর উন্নতির নিমিত্ত এখানে প্রেরণ করিয়াছ, তাঁর দুর্বল শরীরে তোমার বল বিধান কর, তাঁকে জ্ঞান প্রীতি ও পবিত্র ভাবে দিন দিন উন্নত কর, তোমার রূপাতে ইনি আমার এই বৃদ্ধ বয়সের অবলম্বন হইয়া সহায়তা করুন।

যাহারা তোমার উপাসনার নিমিত্ত অল্প সত্ত্বাবে সম্মিলিত হইয়াছেন, তাঁহাদিগের হৃদয়কে তোমার প্রতি আকর্ষণ কর। তাঁহাদের পরস্পরের প্রতি প্রীতিভাবকে সমৃদ্ধ কর। ভ্রাতায় ভ্রাতায়, ভ্রাতায় ভগিনীতে অকৃত্রিম সৌহার্দ্যতার বিস্তার কর। পুত্রদিগের পিতা মাতার প্রতি ভক্তিভাব প্রেরণ কর। স্বামীর প্রতি স্ত্রীর অনুরাগ ও স্ত্রীর প্রতি স্বামীর প্রেমকে উজ্জ্বল কর। কেহই যেন এই সংসারের দুঃখ শোকসম্ভাপে অমঙ্গল আশঙ্কা না করে এবং তোমার অনুরাগে বিঘ্ন বিপত্তির মধ্যেও তোমাকে লাভ করে।

## II

### KESHUB'S PRAYER

[From " Acharya Keshub Chandra," Adi,

p. 162-3]

জগদীশ ! আমি অল্প পিতা মাতা\* ভগিনী ও স্ত্রীতে পরিবেষ্টিত হইয়া তোমাকে পরম পিতারূপে সর্ব্বএই প্রত্যক্ষ করিতেছি। তুমি আমার পরম পিতা, হৃদয়ের ঈশ্বর। চিরকাল তুমি আমাদিগকে তোমার ক্রোড়ে লইয়া মাতার তায় লালন পালন করিয়াছ, কত

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\*কেশবচন্দ্র মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথকে ধর্মপিতা, তাঁহার পত্নীকে ধর্মমাতা, এবং তাঁহাদের কন্যাগণকে ভগিনী বলিয়া সম্বোধন করিতেন। তাই এস্থলে পিতামাতা ভগিনী বলিয়া উল্লিখিত হইয়াছে।

প্রকারে স্মৃতি করিয়াছ, কত রাশি রাশি বিঘ্ন হইতে আমাদিগকে রক্ষা করিয়াছ। গতবর্ষ এই পরিবারের কত প্রকার বিঘ্ন উপস্থিত হইয়াছিল, কত লোক ইহাকে পরিত্যাগ করিয়াছিল, কিন্তু বাস্তবিক আমাদিগের কোন বিঘ্নই হয় নাই। যেখানে মঙ্গলময় স্বয়ং আশ্রয় দিতেছেন, সেখানে আবার বিঘ্ন কি? অনেকেই আমাদিগকে পরিত্যাগ করিয়াছে বটে, কিন্তু তুমি যখন এ পরিবারের গৃহদেবতা, তখন আর আমাদিগের ভয় কি? তুমি যখন আমাদের সহায়, তখন আমাদের মঙ্গলই হইবেক সন্দেহ নাই। এ পরিবার তোমারই পরিবার।

অন্য আমরা সেই জীবনদাতাকে প্রত্যক্ষ করিয়া জীবন সার্থক করিতেছি। আমরা এখন কি দেখিতেছি,—না, চতুর্দিকে মঙ্গলের উন্নতি, ব্রাহ্মদৈবের উন্নতি। আমাদের যে একটি আশা আছে যে, সমুদায় পৃথিবী এক পরিবারে বদ্ধ হইবে, এ আশা রূপা হইবার নহে। সময়ক্রমে গৃহে গৃহে যোগ হইয়া সকলেই প্রীতিরসে মিলিত হইবে, সকল পরিবারই এক হইবে। এক ঈশ্বরের রাজ্যে দুই পরিবার কখনই থাকিবে না, সকল পরিবারই এক হইবে। অন্য এই বঙ্গদেশের মধ্যে তাহার সূত্রপাত হইল।

হে জগদীশ! এ সংসারে এ পরিবারকে রক্ষা করিবার আর কেহই নাই, তুমিই ইহাকে রক্ষা কর। তুমি যে গৃহের অধিদেবতা, তাহার আর অমঙ্গল কোথায়? এ পরিবারই তাহার প্রমাণ। সহস্র সহস্র বিঘ্ন আসিয়া ইহাকে পরিবেষ্টন করিতেছে, অথচ ইহা সকল বিঘ্ন অতিক্রম করিয়া তোমারই ক্রোড়ে অগ্রসর হইতেছে। এ বিঘ্ন বিপত্তির মধ্যেও আমাদিগের ক্লেশ নাই, ভয় নাই, কেবল আনন্দেরই উৎসব উৎসারিত হইতেছে। কি আশ্চর্য্য! আমরা মাতা পিতা ভ্রাতা ভগিনী স্ত্রী সকলেই এখানে একত্র হইয়া ঈশ্বরের চরণে পূজা উপহার দিতেছি।

ধন্য পরম পিতা, আশ্চর্য্য তোমার করুণা, পৃথিবীর এক সীমা হইতে সীমাস্তর পর্য্যন্ত তোমারই মহিমা ঘোষণা হউক, বিস্তৃত প্রেম ও পবিত্র ভাব চতুর্দিকে বিস্তীর্ণ হউক। আমরা যেন লোকভয়ে ভীত না হই। আমরা যেন সাংসারিক সুখের জন্ত লালায়িত না



হই, আমাদের আত্মা যেন সাংসারিক সকল বিষয়েই শাস্ত্য ভাব  
অবলম্বন করে। তোমাকে পাওয়াই যেন আমাদের জীবনের একমাত্র  
লক্ষ্য থাকে।”

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## THE TWO PRAYERS TRANSLATED

### I

#### MAHARSHI'S PRAYER

Thou Spirit Eternal! those who follow Thy ways on them do Thou bestow boons exceeding all expectations. The hopes I entertained Thou hast more than fulfilled. In the beginning my quest for Thee was inspired with the longing to win Thee for myself alone, there was nothing in me of any solicitude for others. How Thou didst quench that thirsty soul of mine with waters immortal! But no sooner was I filled than my spirit longed to pass it on to others. I know very well indeed that I have nothing in me to enable me to carry out this momentous commission of Thine. Yet how could I refrain from trying? Thou didst fire my heart with the persistent demand,—“the waters of life eternal that I have brought to you, serve it out to one and all.” What could I do? Myself of no account, how could I hope to carry it over to others? Yet I was impelled from within. Powerless myself I appealed to the people for help but no real help came. And it seemed that the trust that Thou didst charge me with will remain unfulfilled. I did not get the help I needed, I could not find the right man. How could I, unaided, carry out Thy high commission so that others may taste of it? Who is there that can

receive it? I interrogated myself,—“ O where is that fire? Will it never make its appearance in Bengal? O fire (divine), why is it that thou art confined within the closet of my solitary heart? Break forth like unto an explosive outburst sweeping away the self-delusion and the polluted atmosphere of Bharatvarsha, and encircle the globe as with an all-consuming conflagration.

When with such-like lamentations, tears streamed down my bosom, Thou didst comfort me, and with tender loving hands wiped my tears away. And now, after all these years, my hopes are renewed at sight of this commissioned saint of Thine. The saintly youth who, in company with his wife, has graced my house to-day, the more I enjoy his companionship the greater grows my faith and sense of blessedness. He who is to me dearer than son, who is of undivided heart with me, —who is one with me, how he lives on the joys (bliss) eternal of the Spirit! Of all who have been associated with me, I declare, I have not met with a holier, one more inflexible in purpose, more enlightened, more dowered with such spiritual powers as this godly one? Such an one has come with his wife to brighten my house to-day.

At first I came to possess God for myself; but now my descendants, sons, daughters, daughters-in-law, grandchildren and great grandchildren all will enter into partnership with me. In the beginning I had not the slightest intention of propagating this religion; my one supreme aim was how to attain God and sanctify myself.

But whenever I have been given to possess Thee my hands have been instantly stretched forth to serve Thy ambrosial gifts to others, and my tongue to proclaim Thy glory. Now, O Spirit Supreme, the saintly and righteous one whom Thou hast sent here for the uplift of the world, vouchsafe unto his feeble frame Thy strength (divine, and make him daily wax in wisdom, love and holiness. May he, through Thy grace, come to be the stay of my old age, and help me.

Those who in goodwill have gathered together here for Thy worship, draw their hearts to Thyself, and deepen the spirit of mutual affection in their midst. Between brother and brother, between brother and sister establish genuine attachment. Instil into the hearts of the children the spirit of *bhakti* for parents, and make radiant the mutual love of husband and wife. May the world's sorrow, suffering and bereavement breed no haunting fear of evil in any one; and may love of Thee lead to attainment of Thee inspite of trials and adversities in this world.

## II

### KESHUB'S PRAYER

Thou, Lord of the Universe, surrounded here to-day by father,\* mother, sisters and wife I behold Thee everywhere as indeed the One Supreme Father of all. Thou, the Loving God of my heart, art my Eternal Father. How Thou dost, ever and always,

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\* Keshub calls Devendranath father, his wife mother, and their children brothers and sisters.

lovingly tend us sheltering us in Thine everlasting arms, saving us from a multitude of evils and showering upon us manifold blessings. Last year how many trials befell this family, how many came to forsake it,—and yet, in very truth, we did not suffer any harm. What are troubles when the living God of Love offers His protection ! O God, though many have forsaken us we need have no fear so long as Thou art the ("*grihadevata*") the Guardian (or tutelary) Deity of this household. So long as Thou art our help good will be, without a doubt our portion. This family is Thine own.

Today, we behold God,—the One Giver of good, and realise our blessedness. What do we see around us ?—the promotion of good, of the Brahmo faith, everywhere. The hope that we cherish,—of the world becoming as an united family, that hope will not suffer defeat. In the fulness of time the scattered homes will be drawn together through the solvent of love, and all families become as one. Since God is one, there cannot be a divided family in His domain. One Family on earth ! Behold its inauguration celebration here, today, in this land of Bengal !

O Lord, there is none else in the world to look after this family. Do Thou protect it. How can harm befall the home whose presiding Deity Thou art ? Verily, this family is as the living proof of Thy Providence. Thousands of trials beset it from all sides, and yet through them all it is being driven closer to Thee. Though in the midst of trials and adversities we

have not only no fear, no affliction, but we find that fresh fountains of joy are being unlocked for us. What an unprecedented spectacle is this of an entire family of mother, father, brothers, sisters, wife, assembled here to offer their united worship at the feet of the Spirit God !

Blessed art Thou, O Father Eternal, marvellous is Thy Grace. May Thy glory be proclaimed aloud from one end of the world to the other, and perfect love and purity spread everywhere. May the fear of the world never enter our hearts, may we never hanker after earthly ease, and may our souls, in all matters pertaining to secular life, maintain its native state of tranquillity. Let the one aim of our lives be to attain Thee !

—*Reprinted from the " Navavidhan."*

*March 21 and 28, 1935.*

## Chapter VI

### GREAT COMMEMORATION MEETING AT THE TOWN HALL, CALCUTTA

*(Englishman, January 1884)*

"A very large number of the friends, admirers and followers of the late great Brahmo leader assembled yesterday at the Town Hall, the Hon. W. W. Hunter presiding, for the purpose of taking steps to commemorate his works and memory in some permanent form. There were over two thousand present, and the proceedings were opened by the Sheriff, Mr. H. W. I. Wood, who spoke as follows :—This public meeting has been conveyed in compliance with a requisition addressed to me as the Sheriff of Calcutta, and the purpose of our assembling together in accordance with it, is to consider what steps should be taken to perpetuate the memory of the late Keshub Chunder Sen. The resolutions, which will be submitted for your acceptance, and the addresses of the gentlemen, who will speak upon them, will, I am sure, receive most sympathising and earnest attention, for they refer to the character, worth, and work of one of the most remarkable and eminent men who ever commanded universal admiration, reverence, and respect. (Applause.)

The Secretary to the Committee then read out several letters and telegrams from gentlemen in many parts

of India, sympathising with the objects of the meeting and expressive of regrettable inability to attend.

The Hon. W. W. Hunter, the president, then said :—

“Maharajas, and gentlemen,—We are met together to-day to do honour to the memory of a great man. Some of us have had the privilege of knowing him in more tender and sacred relations, as a religious leader, or as a beloved friend, and the deep sense of personal loss caused by his death has in many ways found fitting expression. But it is neither as his private friends, nor as his spiritual fellows that we are assembled now at this great public meeting. The list of gentlemen who desired the Sheriff to convene the meeting, has been published in the newspapers, and has been read by many of you. It consists, as you know, of representative men of all races and creeds; of Englishmen high in the Councils, and in the administration of the Empire or distinguished at the bar, and on the bench of the Supreme Courts, of Hindus of every caste, from orthodox Brahmans and landholders of ancient noble families, to men of the new lights, and of the most advanced views; of the leaders of the Mahomedan community, of Christian ministers, Protestant and Roman Catholic; of merchants, editors, men of science, and men of the pen. As I read that list, I could not but ask myself what constraining influence was there in my dead friend which sufficed to bring together for common action, a body of men whose views and whose interests lie ordinarily so far apart. Then I remembered a saying of

his own :—" 'It is easy to distinguish a great man, but it is difficult to comprehend him.' It is because we of different races and diverse creeds have distinguished in Keshub Chunder Sen the authentic marks of greatness ; because we have recognised in him one of those rare men of simplicity, genius, and power, whose life was devoted to the welfare of others, and who is now for ever hallowed by the pathos of an early death, that we are here assembled to do honour to his memory. Keshub Chunder Sen was no anonymous person. His days were spent among us. His unwearied public labours, his charm in social intercourse, his warm affections in all the relations of family life, are well known. There was about him, in private, a certain blameless dignity, not less attractive than his splendid public eloquence in speech. It was in truth a many-sided character, singularly transparent, which disclosed even its weaknesses, its limitations, and self-repressions. The only thing not generally known about Keshub Chunder Sen is the extent of his secret charities. He was born in a position well-suited for the part which he was destined to play in life. His grandfather was the friend and co-adjutor of Horace Hayman Wilson ; and his family combined wealth and a high position among the Hindu community with a genuine love of culture. In his early home all that was best in the old and in the new life of Bengal met. From that common camping-ground of eastern orthodoxy in life with western freedom of thought he went forth as a young man on a campaign of his own. Others will tell of the sorrows,



the persecution, the renunciations of those years ; of the hard battles fought ; and of the victory over self and the world finally won. My duty in opening a meeting, representing in a special degree the East and the West, is confined to pointing out that Keshub Chunder Sen represented, in a special manner, the fusion of European science with Indian thought. In his efforts to reach the intellects and the consciences of his countrymen he employed every vehicle of instruction, from the ancient Bengali drama to the modern leading article. The production of the classical play, the Bidhava Bibaha Natak, under the stage managership of the young Keshub Chunder, marks an era not only in the history of the Indian theatre, but in the progress of public opinion on the important question of widow marriage. His tracts for the times, of which the first bore the characteristic title of ' Young Bengal, this is for you '—formed another successful effort to reach the public ear. In his maturer life he employed every modern means which a man of genius and energy can devise for enforcing his spiritual doctrines and his lofty morality upon his countrymen. The newspapers which he founded or with which he identified himself ; his missionary tours ; his ever active pen ; his eloquence in the pulpit and on the platform ; his unwearied zeal in teaching all who came to him to learn ; these were the weapons with which he daily fought his good fight. Death found him in the midst of his labours ; but the concourse at this meeting, and the messages received from many distant lands, prove that India and England

are alike resolved that his memory shall not be forgotten. Before asking His Excellency, the Hon. Mr. Gibbs, to propose the first resolution, permit me to conclude with a few words in which Keshub Chunder Sen, many years ago, expressed his conception of a great man. 'The peculiar destiny of every great man,' he said, 'is to live and die for one idea. This idea is nothing more than a definite plan of the particular reform needed at the time. Around him he finds society degraded, impoverished, and ruined : within him lies an ideal of what society ought to be—an ideal which constantly seeks to realise and to develop itself. His life is thus a life of continued struggle, which ceases only with his life.' My friends, the one idea of Keshub Chunder Sen was the advancement of his countrymen to loftier standards of morality, of religion, and of freedom of thought. For that idea he lived, and with that idea he died." (Loud Applause).

The late Hon'ble J. Gibbs who officiated as Governor-General for the time, and was appointed President of the Memorial Committee, spoke as follows:—

"I rise to propose the first resolution, which is as follows :—That this meeting, representing all classes of the Community, records its sense of the loss sustained by the people of India by the death of Keshub Chunder Sen. It has been a source of sincere though melancholy satisfaction to me to sign the requisition which called this meeting, and also to be present and to take part in the proceedings.

"I have for many years been deeply interested in that great movement over which the lamented Keshub

Chunder Sen so ably and wisely presided. I had heard of it before I came to this country, and when quite a child, remember seeing Rajah Rammohun Roy, who was a friend of my father's, while for the past 20 years I have personally watched its progress with great interest. The resolution describes the meeting as being one representing all classes of the community, and it is as representing one of those classes that I feel it a duty to be present and bear testimony to the loss which India has sustained by the death of this great religious leader. That his removal is a national loss, the presence of so large a number of gentlemen here this afternoon amply testifies. He was a man who had the real welfare of his countrymen most deeply at heart, and his anxiety for that welfare was not limited by the thoughts of this world, its honours and advantages, but took a far higher range, and while he wished to see his followers good citizens and loyal subjects, he hoped and prayed that when this transitory life has passed away, they might obtain great and far more enduring benefits, in that which is to come. In this he strove, for this he laboured night and day, for this he spent his life, yes, for this he gave up his life for his fellow countrymen. It is not for me to enquire into or comment on the tenets of his faith, to show how broad a building he raised on the comparatively narrow foundation he found laid by his predecessor, or how near he has approached to Christianity ; suffice it to say that what he saw good in that as in other religions, he adopted. To the European mind his language and imagery may have seemed

strange and fanciful, those sacred ideas which are so well known to the dwellers in the West, when dressed in an occidental garb are difficult fully to recognise, and we must therefore criticize them as we would the thoughts and words of a western teacher. It is enough for us who had the pleasure of knowing him, who listened to his public utterances, read his writings, and heard his conversation, to feel that he was a great, a good, and an earnest man, whose name will be revered for years to come, whose labours will doubtless bear fruit in an increasing ratio year to year.

" But having sown some generous seed,  
Fruitful of further thought and deed,"

And we may comfort ourselves with the assurance

" I know that age to age succeeds  
Blowing a notice of tongues and needs,  
A dust of systems and of creeds,  
I cannot hide that some have striven,  
Achieving calm, to whom was given  
The joy which mixes man with Heaven."

It is to bear this slight testimony of esteem and regard for the honored dead that brings me here this afternoon to move this resolution."

Nawab Abdul Latif Khan Bahadur in seconding the resolution had but a few remarks to add. Although he was not in the best position to pronounce a judgment upon the religious movement with which Keshub Chunder Sen's name was most prominently associated in the public mind here and elsewhere, yet there were many secular reforms and improvements with which he was intimately concerned. The evils of intemperance

had the most strenuous opponent in Keshub Chunder Sen. Child marriage was the next social evil which he attacked. It was to his efforts, he believed, that the leading native newspaper first became a daily one, and he was also instrumental in the success of the pice native paper, the *Sulab Samachar*. Lastly, in the department of education, the Albert College was subsequently raised to the status of a college under the auspices of Keshub Chunder Sen.

Babu Surendranath Banerji in supporting the resolution said that it was with a degree of melancholy interest that he took part in the mournful ceremony of that day. A prince and a great man had fallen in their midst ; one whose purity of life, whose loftiness of aims and principles, whose self-denying devotion to the highest interests of his countrymen, would, through generations of the yet unborn, entitle him to the admiring gratitude of posterity. (Applause.) It was round the ashes of such a man that they were assembled that day to join their tears with those of the widowed wife and bereaved family ; and to mark in some tangible shape their deep and severe regret at his untimely death.

The resolution was then put and carried unanimously.

The Hon. Mr. Justice Cunningham in proposing the next resolution said,—“ Chairman and Gentlemen. After the eloquent and feeling observations which have been made by the speakers on the first resolution, it is not necessary that I should expatiate at length on

the character of the man in whose honor we are assembled to-day and the remarkable qualities, moral and intellectual, that enabled him to impress his own convictions in so marked a manner on his contemporaries. But I may be permitted to state shortly the grounds on which I think that not only his followers, but the general public may well and fitly signalize his career by some of those external tokens of respect with which grateful society keeps alive the recollection of departed worth. Those causes are to be found in his relation to the country and age in which he lived and his ability to meet its special wants. He must indeed be a dull and unintelligent observer who fails to recognize in what is now going on in India, one of the most important and interesting intellectual revolutions the world has ever known. Two branches of the great Aryan family have met on the plains of Hindustan, not so far from their common cradle—the one well furnished with the results of Western civilization, the last discovery of science, the last achievement of art, the last conquest of philosophic induction of critical analysis, the other hard-bound in a vast structure of tradition, custom, and primitive dogma. The fusion of Western knowledge and criticism with an old-world system naturally produced something like a cataclysm of belief. Physical science assails many parts of the old creeds as grotesque or impossible: the student of history impugns them from a second stand-point, the student of morals from a third, the utilitarian from a fourth. There is a general attitude

of negation. The Queen's Proclamation enjoined that no one should be molested or disquieted by reason of his religious faith ; and well have the injunctions been observed ; but there has been a process at work opposed to which the mandates of Sovereigns are as powerless as the commands of King Canute to the advancing tide. The stream of modern thought rages and surges about the old religious system and undermines them To borrow Mr. Mathew Arnold's simile, the tide of belief, which once flowed, full and strong, on the high shores of the world, is now a remote and languid current, of which we scarcely hear more than a distant murmur. We seem, as has been finely said, like men who ' stand on some dizzy mountain height in the midst of whirling snow and blinding mist, through which we now and then get glimpses of paths, which may be deceptive. If we stand still we shall be frozen to death. If we take the wrong road we shall be dashed to pieces. We do not certainly know if there be any right one. What must we do ? ' In such a state of opinion two courses are easy and common. It is easy to accept with alacrity the negative results of criticism, to welcome as unquestionable gain each new conquest of science over established opinion, to discard with contempt the old faiths, and with the old faiths much that belongs to the highest parts of man's emotional nature. It is common and easy, again, to entrench oneself behind this or that dogmatic system, and to fly for refuge to the kindly sheltering wing of religions which dispose of doubt by condemning the doubter, and solve the

problems of existence by denouncing every attempt at solution as impiety. It is easy, in fact, to be materialist, and it is easy to be superstitious. But neither materialism nor superstition, nor any alliance of the two, will satisfy the aspirations of our age. If the advance of man's understanding in the paths of knowledge is inexorable, equally inexorable, it has been said by one of the leaders of English thought, "are the claims of his emotional nature, which the understanding can never satisfy ; and, if unsatisfied, the human mind, with the yearning of a pilgrim for his distant home, turns to the mystery from which it has emerged, and seeks so to fashion it as to give unity to thought and faith " Such a reconciliation, if it be possible, is the highest of human achievements, and every attempt at it deserves to be regarded with interest and esteem. Common natures cannot conceive, feeble natures cannot attempt it. The Native of India who, amid the surrounding ruins, has the moral force to conceive a system of pure and refined Deism, which satisfies emotion without insulting reason, who can commend his views to other men, and mark out the path in which they may tread and organize a system for the guidance of their lives, is one of the moving spirits of his age. We live in a tempestuous epoch ; whither its wild waves are rushing, to what distant shores, to what unknown oceans, upon what shoals or rocks they may bear us, it is forbidden to human ignorance to guess. It is impossible to ignore the dangers, the anxieties of the position. Meanwhile



the man who can realize the conception of a rational, pure and elevating theology is, as it seems to me, among the benefactors of his species, well entitled to be kept in affectionate remembrance, not only by those whom he immediately influenced, or who accept his doctrines in their entirety, but by the generation to whose highest and gravest wants he endeavoured to minister. The man who, unenslaved by superstition, untrammelled by custom or dogma, unbewildered by the blaze of modern discovery, unterrified by doubt, can minister to man's spiritual wants is his greatest friend. It is because Babu Keshub Chunder Sen was such a minister and friend that I think those among whom he lived ought to do something to keep his memory alive to other times. I have, therefore, to move that "public subscriptions be opened for the purpose of perpetuating the memory of Keshub Chunder Sen by a suitable memorial. The nature of the memorial to be determined hereafter with reference to the amount of subscriptions."

The Rev. Father Lafont, in seconding the resolution, in a short but feeling speech, bore personal testimony to the worth of the late Keshub Chunder Sen. He should be sorry to think that he belonged to an uncompromising church, that his feelings and sympathies were not with Keshub Chunder Sen, whose followers said that he (the speaker), was one of their best friends and positively felt honored by his friendship. If such a man was forgotten, then give up the welfare of India in despair. He needs no statue, for in erecting

a statue to a man like Keshub Chunder Sen they were not honoring him but themselves.

Babu Kallichurn Banerji supported the resolution with a few words, after which it was put and carried unanimously.

Mr. Monmobun Ghose then moved the third resolution, which was as follows :—" That a committee be appointed to give effect to the foregoing resolutions, with power to add to their number, and to appoint a sub-committee."

Committee :—The Hon. W. W. Hunter, L.L.D., President ; Hon. J. Gibbs, C.S.I., C.I.E., H.H. the Maharaja of Kuch Behar ; Maharaja Sir Jotindra Mohan Tagore, K.C.S.I. ; Maharaja Komul Krishna ; Maharaja Narendra Krishna ; Hon. H. S. Cunningham ; Raja Rajendra Narain Deb ; Raja Rajendra Mullick ; Raja Harendra Krishna ; Raja Sourindra Mohan Tagore, C.I.E., Mus., Doc. ; Raja Purna Chandra Singh ; Hon. Romesh Chandra Mitter ; Kumar Inder Chandra Singh ; Hon. Durga Charan Law ; Nawab Abdul Luteef, Khan Bahadur, C.I.E. ; Nawab Diler Jung, C.S.I. ; Hon. Amir Ali ; Prince Farruk Shah ; Hon. Chandra Madhub Ghose ; Mr. F. R. Hogg ; Hon. Mahomed Yusoof ; Hon. Hurbans Sahai ; Kumar Dakhineswar Malia ; Hon. Kristo Dass Pal ; Mr. H. E. M. James ; Pandit Mahesh Chandra Nyaratna, C.I.E. ; Rai Rajendra Lala Mitra, Bahadur, L.L.D., C.I.E., Rev. Father E. Lafont, S.J., C.I.E. ; Mr. Henry Bell ; Mr. Manockjee Rustomjee ; Babu Mohendra Lal Sircar, M.D., C.I.E. ; Rev. K. M. Banerjee, L.L.D. ;

Dewan Rai Jaiprakash Lal, Bahadur ; Kumar Nil Krishna ; Mr. D. B. Smith, M.D. ; Rai Koonjo Lal Bannerjee, Bahadur ; Mr. F. Atkinson ; Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee ; Rai Kanai Lal Dey, Bahadur ; Mr. R. Harvey, M.D. ; Mr. D. B. Mehta ; Noor Mahomed Haji Jackeriah ; Mr. R. Knight ; Babu Dwijendra Nath Tagore ; Mr. R. D. Mehta ; Babu Bhudeb Mukerjee, C.I.E. ; Rai Shama Churn Dey, Bahadur ; Mr. B. L. Gupta ; Mr. H. M. Rustomjee ; Rev. K. S. Macdonald ; Babu Rajendra Nath Mitter ; Mr. H. N. Gladstone ; Babu Peary Mohun Mukerjee ; Mr. John Croft ; Babu Gobin Lal Seal ; Babu Kanai Lal Seal ; Rai Ram Sunker Sen, Bahadur ; Mr. O. C. Dutt ; Mr. T. Palit ; Babu Jadu Lall Mullick ; Babu Issen Chundra Mitter ; Babu Keshub Chundra Acharjya ; Mr. S.E.J. Clarke ; Babu Bankim Chandra Chatterji ; Babu Nil Comul Mitter ; Mr. Grish Chundra Dutt ; Mr. Govin Chandra Dutt ; Babu Surendra Nath Banerji ; Rev. J. M. Thoburn, D.D. ; Babu Nanda Lal Bose ; Mr. J. O'B. Saunders ; Babu Protap Chundra Mozumdar ; Babu Kali Nath Mitter ; Babu Joy Govinda Shome ; Babu Hem Lal Dutt ; Mr. Robert Turnbull ; Babu Bhoirub Chandra Banerji ; Baboo Tarruck C. Sircar ; Mr. M. Ghose ; Babu Boikuntha Nath Bose ; Babu Joy Gopal Sein ; Babu Boikuntha Nath Sein ; Babu Prya Nath Ghose and Babu Bepin Behari Sircar, Joint-Secretaries.

The resolution was seconded and supported by Kumar Nilkrishna and Babu Protap Chunder Mozumdar, and carried unanimously.

H. H. The Maharaja of Kuch Behar then proposed a vote of thanks to the chair, which was seconded by Rajah Harendra Krishna, and carried unanimously.

The meeting then came to a close.

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## KESHUB'S TOWN HALL LECTURE, 1882

(*The "Statesman," January, 1882*)

Elaborate statistics and arguments have been employed both in this country and in England to prove that Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen has of late years fallen from his once acknowledged position as the leader—head and shoulders above all his followers—of the Brahmo Somaj of India ; that he is now the prophet of a small and mystic sect of devotees who have laid their freedom at his feet ; while liberal and progressive Brahmoism is to be sought for and found in the organisation of the body called the *Sadharan Brahmo Somaj* which seceded from Keshub's Church after the Cooch Behar marriage. \* \* \* But they have nothing among them to compare with the commanding personality of Keshub Chunder Sen. When Keshub speaks, the world listens ; and listen full well it may, for, after hearing his lecture on Saturday last, we have less hesitation than ever in according him a place among the world's great religious geniuses and teachers. No matter how small may be the number of his professed adherents (and they are probably very much more numerous than were the followers of Christ during His life time), his voice and his teaching are not limited to them, but go abroad to the ears of all

the Somajes, of all his educated countrymen, of all religious thinkers wherever the English language prevails.

The splendid oration which he delivered on Saturday on "That Marvellous Mystery, the Trinity," was perhaps the most remarkable of the many great manifestoes he has given forth year after year in the Town Hall. In mere oratory we have, we think, heard from him a better sustained effort than this. Portions of the speech were fine to the pitch of sublimity ; but in other parts, there was a slightly apparent halting and hesitation as if he were labouring with his subject ; and considering what the subject was, it would have been wonderful had there been no unevenness in the flow of his eloquence. But the speech had merits which more than counterbalanced any oratorical defect. As a negative merit of no small importance, we may say that there was in it less than usual of that egotism, which—even when it was the egotism of ostentatious humility—we have sometimes thought a blemish in his religious discourses. But the grand feature of the speech undoubtedly was its presentation of the New Dispensation as the Christian religion reborn ; its old Church garments fallen from it ; freed from the formularies of ages and the letter which killeth ; a Christianity which faith can devoutly accept and science cannot cavil at ; a religion which demands the adhesion of all earnest souls and seems almost prepared to compel the adhesion of all Christian sects. Mr. Sen's exposition of the doctrine of the Christian Trinity is apparently

meant to offer a basis on which all sects of Christians, and multitudes who are not at present professed Christians at all, may unite so as to form a great Universal Church. It is not for us to say whether or not the basis is a practicable one, or whether or not it may ever, with or without modifications, be accepted by the religious world ; we only say that such is, so far as we can judge, the magnificent ambition of the minister of the New Dispensation, and we may add that the basis is at least such as must command the earnest thoughtful, reverential consideration of all religious minds. We purposely abstain from attempting to analyse the speech. We merely give in this general way the first strong impression of it on the mind. It will demand careful reading and long reflection.

We may add that one or two passages in it were of doubtful wisdom, and may create misunderstanding. We may specify his reference to the Virgin Mary, and his unqualified assertion that Christ did not come to teach morality. On this latter point, we have little doubt that all that was needed was fuller explanation ; and it was impossible in a speech dealing with so much, minutely to explain everything. But we may venture to hint a suspicion that we here touch a weakness in the religion of the New Dispensation, in that it gives too much prominence to mere devotion, and too little to practical morality. If we are right, the weakness is a serious if not a fatal one ; but we may be wrong.

MAHARSHI DEVENDRA NATH TAGORE'S  
LETTER ON  
BRAHMANANDA KESHUB

The following letter the venerable Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore wrote after the schism to a mutual friend on the subject of Minister Keshub. The letter was written in the excellent Bengali of which he was such a facile master, and a portion of it is given here, we confess, in indifferent English :—

“... ..What need I say of Brahmananda here? He has become the talk and discourse of people. Whether they praise him or blame him, none seem to drink a drop of water without taking his name. Some welcome him with delight, some censure him. He remains firm in the midst of honor or disgrace, applause or condemnation, and has given his life for the progress of the Brahmo Somaj. Like the rays of the sun he preaches religion impartially in the palace of the king and in the cottage of the poor. His life lasts as long as he preaches his (God's) religion, and sings His glory. For that religion, even death is acceptable to him. His glory is like that of the mid-day sun, at the same time that cheerfulness, mildness, humility and devotion brighten the beauty of his countenance. If I retain the image of any person in mind, it is his whole person, from head to foot, from the bright nails of his toes to the adjustment of the hairs on the head, reflected before me even now as I write this letter. If ever I shed tears of love for any person, it was for him. Those tears are no longer existing; the blood in my

heart has become so little that it can no longer be transformed into the tears of the eye. My eyes have become dry, or this letter would have been wet with tears. Brahmananda has risen to such height that we cannot reach him. We cannot understand his views. Everything appears like a shadowy riddle. We in our love for the mother-country content ourselves with the sayings of the *Rishis* ; he, fired with an extraordinary and impartial love, seeks to harmonise the theists of India with the theists of Palestine and Arabia !”

[For other letters vide “ Keshab as Seen by His Opponents ” by G. C. Banerji.]

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## Chapter VII

### GREAT COMMEMORATION MEETING IN AMERICA

*Addresses at a meeting held under the auspices of  
the Free Religious Association at the  
Parker Memorial Hall, Boston,  
Sunday Evening, February 3rd, 1884.*

Parker Memorial Hall was generously offered by the trustees for the holding of this meeting, and the choir of the twenty-eighth Congregational society gave their services to the occasion. A large audience, entirely filling the hall, assembled. The platform and desk had been decorated appropriately, by ladies of the society, with flowers and plants. At 7-35 P.M., the President of the Free Religious Association and the other expected speakers went upon the platform, and the President, Mr. Potter, after formally opening the meeting made a thrilling speech from which we make the following extract :—

" It is one of the objects of the Free Religious Association, as stated in its Constitution, 'to increase fellowship in the spirit' ; and it is on this basis that this meeting is held. We propose to commemorate a man and a movement on the other side of globe : but there are affiliations of moral aim, ties of spiritual aspiration, that are not affected by space. We propose to commemorate a man and a movement belonging to a very

different nationality, to a different race—unless we go back many thousand years for the kinship—from that to which, probably every person in this assembly belongs, —a man and a movement of a different religion from that in which, probably, every one here has been educated; but there is a 'fellowship in spirit' that is not limited by the frontiers of nations, and that links differing religions together in amity. We wish it, therefore, distinctly understood that it is on this ground that the Free Religious Association has appointed this meeting in commemoration of Keshub Chunder Sen,—moved to this commemorative action by his lately announced death,—and in commemoration of the Brahmo Somaj of India, of which, in recent years, Keshub Chunder Sen has been the most distinguished leader and representative. Neither the Free Religious Association nor any speakers who may take part in this meeting will be held thereby necessarily to have indorsed the beliefs of Chunder Sen nor the doctrinal position of the Brahmo Somaj. With their special doctrines, we have here nothing to do, except so far as any speakers may give information upon them. It is not his creed, but the *man* that we celebrate; and, even more than the man, the movement for religious and moral reform for which to us his name stands. There are those in India who must mourn for Chunder Sen, because a personal friend has dropped from their side; must mourn, how deeply, for he was personally one of the warmest-hearted, most attractive and magnetic of men. There are those who are sorrowing for the breaking of

even tenderer ties. And there are those who are mourning for him, because he was the bulwark of beliefs and of a church that are to them most dear. But, to us, he was a religious, moral, and social reformer. Our sympathies are touched because a great leader has fallen who was seeking, with the sublime earnestness of a consecrated moral enthusiasm, to lift his people up to a better hope, to higher faiths, to purer and larger life.

And there is a *special* reason why this meeting should be held under the auspices of the Free Religious Association,—if I may be pardoned for mentioning it, for I would not unduly emphasize on such an occasion the prominence of that or any organization. But the reason to which I refer is a little piece of history, which may be of interest and value to the meeting. The Free Religious Association was, as I suppose, the agency by which Keshub Chunder Sen was first introduced as a personal entity to the American public. There had been a few vague reports, published in some of the religious newspapers, of a great native religious reformer, in India, who was preaching against idolatry and other superstitions and evil customs of the native faith. But these were only vague and second or third hand reports. Being particularly impressed by something that was said of him in one of Rev. Mr. Dall's letters, or reports, to the Unitarian Association (Mr. Dall, you know, is the Unitarian missionary in India), I wrote to Mr. Dall to learn Mr. Sen's address ; and, having obtained the address, I then wrote to Chunder

Sen, in my capacity as Secretary of the Free Religious Association, as friendly and cordial a letter as it was in my power to indite. That was in 1867, the year in which the Free Religious Association was organized. I told him of the movement here, sent him a copy of the Constitution and of the report of the first meeting, and particularly pointed out the fact that our platform and membership were not confined to Christian limits, but contemplated a unity of persons who might come from or still be of different religions, but were one in the search for truth and in the feeling of human brotherhood.

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Keshub Chander Sen was the General Secretary of a Union of Brahmo Somaj Societies : and in a few months there came back from him a long letter, giving a lucid historical account of the Brahmo Somaj movement, and of its position, and work at that time. The letter was inspired throughout with the tenderest feelings, and contained expressions of the most grateful appreciation of the message of sympathy I have sent to him, as Secretary of the Free Religious Association. It was read at the annual meeting of the Association in 1868, published in the annual report of the meeting, and printed also, in full, in the *New York Tribune* and some other widely circulated journals. And this was, doubtless, the first word from Keshub Chunder Sen to the American public,—the first word printed in America, either from him or about him, with a distinct personality behind it.

And the letter was a surprise, and the beginning of a better intelligence about the conditions of life in India, even to many well-informed and liberal minds. I confess, for myself, to a glow of unexpected satisfaction, as I broke the seal of the letter, and read there the lofty thoughts and sentiments, couched in the most elegant English, written by the author's own hand, and in a style of penmanship testifying to all the refinements of the highest culture. I was expecting, of course, an intelligent reply ; and I was prepared to find some reciprocation of the sentiments of brotherhood contained in my letter. But I had surmised that the author's native speech might have to be translated by an English and Christianly educated clerk, so that I should not feel quite sure but that the inward sentiment as well as the outward dress of the Hindu's epistle had been shaped by the foreign scribe. But, when I saw that I held in my hand the letter just as it came from his, and that I had read the thoughts just as they came from his pen and brain, the thought that first struck my mind—and I am not certain that I did not involuntarily utter it aloud—was, "And this comes from a land and a religion which we call pagan, and to which we send missionaries !" And I more vividly recall the astonishment manifested in a group of liberal Unitarian people to whom I showed and read the letter before it was made public. One excellent and quite well-read woman—and she only voiced, with a little emphasis, the general feeling of the group—exclaimed : "Do you mean to say that

that letter was actually written and composed by a native Hindu, a pagan? And do those people who belong to the religious society he describes really worship the true God?" I could only assure her that I had full faith, from the circumstances, that the letter was no forgery; that it was written by a native Hindu, and by one whom I feared many good Christian people would stigmatize as pagan; and, as to the question whether he and his fellow-members of the Brahmo Somaj worshipped the true God, I could say no more than that, so far as I could judge, they seemed to be able to tell us of Christian America about as much concerning God as we could tell them.

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But in 1859, a new power came into the church. A young man appeared, not yet twenty-five years old full of fervor and energy and enthusiasm, and delivering *extempore* sermons in English. He had previously organized a small society of young men for cultivation of religious feeling, and he and his helpers now came into the Brahmo Somaj. He preached with the fire of a genuine prophet, and the desire burned in his heart to put the new faith into deed as well as into belief: to carry the reforms into practice, which had heretofore largely remained as statements. This young zealot was Keshub Chunder Sen. At once, the mantle of his teacher and friend, Tagore, seemed to fall upon his shoulders. These young men brought the fresh consecration of their youth and their hopes to the altar of the Brahmo Somaj. They brought the

spirit of self-denial, of self-abnegation, even to the point of asceticism. They were fired with missionary zeal, and longed to go through their country declaring the good news of the purer faith they had learned. And, from this time, the Brahmo Somaj became more actively-propagandist,—though some of the congregations still lagged behind on the old basis. The wonderful oratory of Keshub Chunder Sen was a power which the movement had not before possessed. Speaking with equal facility in Bengalee or in English, he had the matchless gift of swaying great multitudes by the magic of his words and the force of the personality behind them. Audiences of thousands of people flocked to hear him, and many were the new adherents which his eloquence rallied to the standards of the reformed church. The fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man,—these were the two principles, the two front corner-stones of all his preaching and work. The Brahmo Somaj, under Chunder Sen's leadership, as before, has remained theistic. Belief in personal theism is its creed, though it has an adumbration of supporters who decline to put their name to that or any creed. And with the theistic creed are found the cognate beliefs in the efficacy of prayer, in the possibility of personal communion with God, and in the large use of devotional exercises as a means to spiritual culture. But the young men who came into the Brahmo Somaj with Chunder Sen were ready to follow him also in a new application of the doctrine of human brotherhood. They bravely and heroically attacked the caste system of India,

bulwarked though it be by the strongest prejudices and traditions of the ancient faith of the country. They sought the emancipation and education of woman, the reform of the marriage laws and customs, and the extension of popular education. To give up idolatry, they said, was not enough. Their religion must mean humanity, enlightenment, justice, charity, practical brotherhood. To bring, indeed, the whole world together, all religions and all races, in a theistic fraternity, has been their aim,—a sublime aim, we may call it, though we may doubt its realization.”

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Col. J. W. Higginson in course of a feeling address thus delivered himself :—

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“ Side by side with our thought of him (Wendell Phillips) comes the thought of that other great reformer, so remote from him, whom Mr. Potter has mentioned, who, too, had somewhat the same experience,—the danger that rests upon a life devoted to reform. He, too, in his later years, seemed to waver in his duty as to some of the momentous problems that he encountered. He, also, had to lose friends and allies, and to make new ones. And yet he, also, in dying, left a circle of those who knew him, and who would wisely look beyond the later period of doubt and deviation of opinion to the earlier period, when the record was absolutely clear. In that earlier period, the name of Keshub Chunder Sen was a source of inspiration, as that of his great leader, Ram Mohun Roy, had been before,



to those who sought free thought all over the world.

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We have not had this evening any actual quotations from his works. I have found time to note down for you a few striking extracts from his speeches in London, as reported by Miss Sophia Collet, a lady whom I have the pleasure of knowing, and who devoted herself with enthusiasm to reporting the speeches of this learned Oriental while he was there. These speeches vindicate so singularly the temper and tone of the man that I should like to read to you a few extracts from them. He said this, for instance, in an address to the Swedenborgian Association of England, I think:—

‘I do not then care to inquire whether I ought to call myself a Christian or not. I prefer the name of Theist, by which I mean a believer in the one true God; and if, humbly, by means of prayer and faith, can place myself constantly and eternally at the feet of the Lord my God, my Father, my Saviour, my Redeemer, All-in-All, I shall have compassed the destiny of life. I covet not names nor distinctions. If Christians want to shut me out from their sympathy and love, they can do so; but I know you are not disposed to do so.’

And, so long as he remained in England, nobody was so disposed. He says, sketching more fully his purpose:—

‘Let us bring together all these various churches into which Christendom has been divided, bring

together the Vedas and the Koran, and all the Hindu and Mahommedan Scriptures, and all the races and creeds and nationalities existing on earth; bring these together, and let us put them all into proper shape, and let us realize the unity of the True Church of God. That is the responsibility which hangs upon our shoulders, that is the duty which each man owes to the great God and to mankind. If we embrace all nations and races from the beginning, from the creation of man down to the present moment, if we can take in all religious scriptures, all so-called sacred writings, if we are prepared to do honor to all prophets and the great men of all nations and races, then certainly, but not till then, can we do justice to universal and absolute religion such as exists in God.

I am most anxious to see men of all religious denominations in the East and West unite in a vast Theistic brotherhood, that they may worship and serve their common Father, and find salvation in that universal creed of love to God and love to man which, according to Jesus Christ, is the way to eternal life.'

What a magnificent conception is that ! That grand offer of the Romish Church to be the same to all the races on the globe, that superb motto, of which that Church is so proud, '*Semper, ubique, ab omnibus*,'— 'Always, everywhere, by all,'—how insignificant that seems beside a conception which includes the Roman Catholic Church itself as but one item in this vast accumulation of human faiths and men's aspirations !

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One thing more, to show you that this great Eastern thinker, as Mr. Potter has said, was not merely one who sowed thought, but also action, was a practical reformer for man as well as a seeker of his Theistic union, let me read this tremendous wail of mourning which thrilled England while he was there,—a mourning appeal against English Christianity for the wrongs it had done his Hindu people :—

'Go into the quiet little villages in the provinces, and you there see hardy Hindu life in its purity and charming simplicity, such as has not been surpassed in any other portion of the globe. But where is that purity and where is that simplicity now ? It is fast dying out amid the ravages of so-called civilization. We have your telegraphs and your railways, and all the great things introduced by modern civilization, But, if you have taught us Shakespere and Milton, I ask, have you not taught our young men the use of brandy and of beer ? You now see scores and hundreds of young, intelligent, educated natives of India falling away and dying from the ravages of intemperance. It is painful to contemplate the ravages of this vice in our country. What was India thirty or forty years ago, and what is she to-day ? Methinks thousands of poor, helpless widows and orphans are at this moment rending the air with their wailings and cries, and who, I may say, often times go the length of cursing the British Government for having introduced this dreadful poison. This very moment I could count upon my fingers' ends hundreds of young, educated men who have died prematurely in

the full bloom of their intellectual vigor and physical energy.'

Since the Emperor of China protested against the inhumanity of England in forcing opium upon thousands at the point of the bayonet, there has not been, from a source outside Christianity, so terrible an arraignment of Christian civilization as that; and he who made it may well, in his later life, have varied with his mood, or with the condition of his health, or with the immediate influences around him, as to the precise details of his position,—no matter, his early life was the same. Every man has a right to appeal from the weakness of his later years to the position he took in the full vigor of his prime. Mr. Sen could do the same. His fame may stand by the record of his English visit. It may stand by the strength of the protest he made for his nation against the wrongs they endured; and he will stand to us, I think, always as the representative of the tie that connects, all the world over, not those who think alike, but those who aim at the same great end; not those who hold the same creed, but those who subordinate all creeds to aspiration. And a man like him, dying or living, has proved that this organization of ours is founded on a principle, and is a guarantee of its permanence as long as we shall be true to its ideas."

Mrs. Ednah D. Cheney in course of a happy speech referred in the following manner 'to the lost leader' of the Brahmo Somaj:—

"We could do no justice to the great work of the Brahmo Somaj and its lost leader, Keshub Chunder Sen,

without considering what they have done, to elevate the condition of women in India.

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But the tendency of the Brahmo Somaj, as will be shown here to-night, has been of late strongly toward the spiritual side of religion; and its feeling for women has culminated in a doctrine which it sets forth with full power of reasoning as well as feeling, the doctrine of the divine maternity. Its theism would be imperfect if it were not all-embracing, and if, while including all the attributes of humanity, it ignored one of its highest manifestations. 'God, our Father,' was the word of Jesus. 'God, our Father and Mother both,' is the language of Keshub Chunder Sen; and, in this thought he finds the promise and potency of all future good for the race.

'God, our Mother, shall rule in our hearts, in our homes, and in our church, drawing men and women together as one holy family. This is the faith of advanced theism.' "

Mrs. Julia Ward Howe in addressing the meeting alluded in very feeling terms 'to the career of this benefactor of human race,' and we take the following lines from her speech :—

" *Dear Friends*,—I have not a pencil-note with me nor a sentence ready made to my mind: but I come here with a thought to express to you, if the infirmity of my memory will allow me to do it.

It does not need even my memory to say with what gladness I have taken note of the career of this bene-

factor of the human race, this great helper of man and of woman, to commemorate whose services we are met together here to-night. I read with great interest, some years ago, a published volume of Keshub Chunder Sen's addresses in England ; and it was a notable thing that he seemed to be more Christian than we can think the community he addressed to have been, in general. He seemed to speak from a higher religious plane than the common level of—well, of the English community. At least, what he said, his thoughts themselves, appeared to me in that position and in that contrast.

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One thing Col. Higginson did not mention about our dear friend. He did not particularize his interest in the woman suffrage cause, and I must not fail to speak of that ; for there he was at home. That was, like the cause of the slave, a plain matter of justice ; and into that he could carry that grand and brilliant chivalry which shook this whole country with its electric force and power. I thank him for it to-day, and I thank God for him.

And now that we are losing these great friends, these glorious lights, stars in our firmament, can we consent to lose them? Oh, let us never for one moment think that we lose them! We lose their lovely, their cheering presence ; but their lives were so wrought into work for the benefit of mankind that that work endures. It is immortal ; and, if we have faith we shall find it more and more. I sometimes think that

the great spreading of Christianity after the death of Christ—instantly, you know, the circle became very much enlarged was perhaps because, having no longer the master, having no longer the interest of going about with him, hearing what he should say, and seeing what he should do, people began to take note of what his doctrine had been, and of the hearts which had been touched by him. So, when we have no longer any of these friends, to whose words we can listen, let us listen for the wide human echo of what they have said, and of what they have done. And I believe that it will ring to the end of time, and have its part in the glad 'Amen' of eternity."

The following excerpt is taken from the speech of Mr. James Kay Applebee.

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"His (Chunder Sen's) religion, therefore, made him a great social reformer. God was real to him. Man was real to him. What was true in reference to God of any one man was true also in reference to God of every other man. The *sudra* (the man of the lowest caste) became to him a brother, and equal heir with himself to all the divine promises. He looked with reverence on woman, and insisted on elevating her from that low estate to which Hindu civilization had doomed her. He abolished, among the Brahmos, child-marriages, and pronounced the doom of polygamy. His doctrine of the divine Fatherhood necessitated the doctrine of the human brotherhood. And this, again, to Chunder Sen—a man to whom

doctrines represented vital facts—necessitated the sweeping away of all those impediments which ancient superstition and ancient ignorance had planted in the way of the full and ripe development of every man and of every woman.

Again, Chunder Sen believed in the universality of inspiration. And this was also a favorite doctrine with Theodore Parker. If he taught one thing with more persistency than another, Theodore Parker was wont to inspire the doctrine of the universality of inspiration—that to be inspired God was man's normal condition. Inspiration was to him as natural as the sunshine and man's gladness therein. 'All faculties,' he said, 'are mediums of communication, avenues of inspiration. God does not build a road from himself to us, and then refuse to travel on it. You and I may have inspiration of the same sort as came to Moses, to Esaias,—'Whose hallowed lips were touched with fire,'—and to Jesus. We all may be inspired. When you are faithful to your own powers, you are not only receiving communications through them, but you are preparing yourself at the same time to receive yet more and more. There is a continual progress of this inspiration for the individual and the race. It is unbounded. There is no limit to the supply in God. There is no end to the capacity in mankind to receive it.' Thus in the estimation of Theodore Parker, in the matter of inspiration, man did but take what the Infinite Spirit was universally giving. And this was just Chunder Sen's view of inspiration. He believed in one bible; and the bible he believed in



was made up of the great book of nature and of that grand series of books, the sacred scriptures of all the nations, in which are recorded the spiritual intuitions of the human mind. Nature to him was, as Carlyle would say, the 'time vesture of Deity.' To his view in the vast and the minute, the divine life 'spread undivided and operated unspent.' On the smallest atom, he saw an image of divine infinity impressed. In blast and hail, in thunder and lightning, in water-spout and avalanche, in ocean's roaring tides and in the equipoise maintained between the worlds, he saw so many symbols of the divine power. In the majestic order of the universe,—in that one mighty law which binds atom to atom, world to world, system to system,—he saw evidences of the truth that *one purpose* runs through all things, and that there is an intimate relationship between 'the thoughts of men' and 'the process of the suns.'

It was thus an inspired world in which Chunder Sen lived. He revered the flowers for the divine love of which, through their perfumed lips, they mutely spake to him. He revered a star for the divine power which kept it in its place, and bade it do its part in giving brilliancy and beauty to universal space. The whispering leaves that soothe thought to calmness and content, the crashing fury of the storm awakening awe within the soul, the pleasant murmur of the waters as they ripple onward toward the sea, the melody of birds, the uniform motions of the planets, the pleasant fertility of the earth, the fragrance of all plants,—these, no less than the lips of brother man through which divine

wisdom breaks in words inspired,—these, no less than the face of brother man through which the divine love shineth like a sun,—all these were held in reverence by him, because they told him so much of God. But he delighted most of all in communing with the Divine in the deep recesses of his own soul ; and it was ever an ecstasy to him to discover that his own highest and purest intuitions did but indorse the nobler sentiments enshrined in the ancient Vedic hymns and in the Hebrew prophets and in the recorded words of that supreme hero of loving kindness, Jesus of Nazareth.

\* \* \* \*

It is said that, during the latter years of his life, he believed himself to be an inspired prophet, and that he had vouchsafed to him divine visions and divine revelations. Well knowing what he was, knowing the grand work he did, I have no difficulty in believing that

‘ God fulfils in many ways.

Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.’

\* \* \* \*

It is said that the Brahmos of India are split up into three or four sects. All right ! The more, the merrier ! But, after all, we have no right to urge *that* against them as a reproach. Christianity itself is split up into three or four hundred sects, and each one of the three or four hundred is sublimely confident that it alone possesses the genuine truth as it is in Jesus. There is an old school and new school among the Brahmos, just as there is an old school and a new school in every sect of Christendom. Even the Unitarians have their old and

new schools ; and, between the awful gulf separating the two schools, they have, only quite recently, succeeded in fixing up a very rickety sort of bridge. The orthodox Congregationalists have their old and new schools,—the members of the new school are very much like old-fashioned Unitarians, and the members of the old school are holding on to Calvinism by means of the skin of their teeth.

In travelling out West, I almost invariably noticed that every little town I came to possessed six or seven churches. The church which had the tallest spire was invariably the church which had been built last. Indeed, the churches seemed to be *aspiring* in no other direction than that. Of course, six or seven churches in a little town of two or three thousand inhabitants means six or seven little parsons preaching on starvation wages. Why, can't the churches in such a case pool their issues ? They all profess to worship the same God, to follow the same Master, and to be bound for the same heaven, if their notions of heaven be correct, they will have to 'pool their issues,' when they get there ; and why can't they realize a little but of heaven on earth, and so get accustomed to it ? But, while such divisions exist in Christendom, Christians, of all people in the world, have no right to point a finger of scorn at the divisions which obtain among the Brahmos of India.

So far as counting heads goes the Brahmos of India do not seem to amount to much. There are fewer Brahmos in India, in proportion to the population, than there are Unitarians in America. But that does not

mean that the movement is going to fail. Even so acute an observer as Max Muller has said that the movement will probably bring about a complete regeneration of India's entire religious life. It represents the little leaven which will leaven in time the entire Indian lump. Great thoughts do not die, although their representatives may die. Chunder Sen was a man of such a pure and yet massive individuality that, although dead, he will continue to speak. Thinking of what he was and of what he said, I cannot imagine the time as ever coming when multitudes of men will cease reverently saying, to his great personality, if not in the words of the poet, at least with the poet's thought :—

‘ Noble thought produces

Noble ends and uses ;

Noble hopes are part of Hope, wherever she may be ;

Noble thought enhances

Life and all its chances ;

And noble self is noble song,—all this we learned from thee.’ ”

Rev. Edward Everett Hale in taking part in the proceedings of the meeting thus expressed himself with reference to Mr. Chunder Sen.

“ I was not expecting to say a word when I came in ; and I will say but a word now, and that is one which is in every heart, I am sure. The only way to celebrate one of these true heroes, one of these leaders of mankind, is to take up his work and carry it further. And, if our sympathy with our Indian friends means anything, if our enthusiasm for this prophet—who rose just where most of us, perhaps, expected it least—

means any thing, it means that we, like him, will take the spirit of any gospel which comes to us, and will tread the letter under foot : that we will ' live in the spirit and walk in the spirit,' and strive to act out the spirit of whatever religion has attracted us and has touched us.

Futile it would be to form an idea of the great man without recollecting the difficulties, the immense difficulties, by which he was environed. I do not think any of our prophets, any of our martyrs, have ever had to snap such fetters and chains, or have ever broken out from such restrictions. My excellent friend Mr. Dall, the Unitarian missionary in India, who had the pleasure of placing the works of Theodore Parker in Chunder Sen's hands, and from whom, I think, I first heard of this great hero, said once of the general run of East Indians, who had any faith at all, that no one could quarrel with them so far as loving the Lord their God with all their heart was concerned. They had heart enough, he said ; and they loved the Lord their God with all their mind. There was a good deal of intellect about their theology. Nor was it impossible to say that they loved him with all their soul ; perhaps it was harder to say what they meant by that. But the great trouble, as he thought, of the East was that they did not love the Lord their God *with all their strength*. That has been the trouble with India all through her history. I thought of that when I read from the charming *Light of Asia*, that it was that ' which hath made our Asia mild.' When we see such a man as Keshub

Chunder Sen,—\* \* we see any such man as a man come forward, we see a free man who has broken away from every environment that has surrounded him in the past, that he may be a true prophet of the future. And, if we are really proud and glad for the life to which he rose, we shall strive with all our might to carry forward this spiritual faith in which he has been such a leader."

Rev. Philips Brooks thus wrote to the President apologising his absence:—

" *My Dear Mr. Potter*,—I should be very glad indeed to come to the meeting and speak of Keshub Chunder Sen. I was very much interested in seeing him last year, and there was much that was very attractive in his character and way of thinking. But, on the evening of the 3rd of February, I have an engagement which I must fulfil. I have promised to preach near Boston. So I must lose the pleasure of coming to your meeting. I thank you very much for asking me, etc."

Rev. M. J. Savage wrote thus:—

" *My Dear Mr. Potter*,—I should say yes to any request of yours, were it possible.

I *always* have a home church service the first Sunday night of each month. And *all* my Sunday nights are engaged until into March.

Sorry, but can't help it. I hope you may have grand meeting, for you have a grand theme."

Mr. Joseph T. Duryea wrote to the President as follows :—

*"My Dear Dr.,—*It would be a great privilege to me to recognize the aspirations of such a man as he was whom you intend to commemorate. Just now, when it is made necessary to emphasize against the materialism of the time the ineradicable religious elements in human nature, it is well to seize upon the manifestations in India, and make them prominent in the thought of earnest and inquiring men and women.

I cannot attend the meeting you have planned, since I have to be in Brighton at the time on an exchange with Mr. Leavel.

I hope something will be said that will be heard after, and in affirmation of the significance of this new proof that man does not and cannot 'live by bread alone.' "

Mr. Charles D. B. Mills writing to the President said :—

*"Dear Mr. Potter,—*I am glad that the Free Religious Association proposes to hold some memorial service in recognition of the late Keshub Chunder Sen and the thought he stood for as one of the leaders so long in the Brahmo Somaj.

This movement that we know under the name 'Brahmo Somaj,' or 'Church of the one God,' is one of the most significant things of modern times. Mr. Johnson says it 'deserves the name of inspiration as truly as anything in history.' It is in spirit a protest

in behalf of the soul, for the claims of free and progressive religion. Coming out of the bosom of the old Brahmanic paganism,—a most inveterate and indurated idolatry,—it is a living attestation of the vitality that still exists quenchless in human nature, and sure, under whatever repression and throttling, sooner or later to rouse and assert itself.

How far this movement has been consistent, true to its own primal principles, how far Mr. Chunder Sen and his friends may have faltered or swerved in allegiance to the purposes held in the body of this community itself, it may be difficult for any of us at this distance to see, certainly I do not know. If they or any of them have failed or fallen short, it will not be by far the first example in history; it will not have been the last. Certainly, the ability of a company of men and women in India to reach and persistently hold an aim so high as is defined in the declaration of several of their prominent leaders—*this*, to honor all truth in whatever religious scriptures, but to accept no book as infallible; to honor all prophets and sages of whatever nationality or time, yet receive none as a finality; to build upon no historic name as a centre, but to follow the transcendent ideals of the soul—is a fact well worth our grateful recognition here in America."

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### NEWS FROM THE WEST

Various misrepresentations have been made both by friends and foes in Europe and India of what is known as "the Cooch Behar marriage." We know



how the great Minister Keshub refrained from defending himself from the charges brought against him by thoughtless and misinformed persons. Keshub, the *Man of faith*, depended entirely on God for the vindication of the truth and his unblemished character in time. The high object of master Keshub in giving his daughter in marriage to the Maharajah of Cooch Behar cannot be adequately understood for sometime to come by the public at large and even by his disciples as it has already been the case with some of them. The explanations which Mr. P. C. Mazumdar has given on the subject in his book on the "Life and Teachings of Keshub Chunder Sen" are imperfect and some of the statements are erroneous.

Miss Cobbe, one of the greatest admirers of Minister Keshub in England, has done a great service to the Brahmo Somaj and a justice to master Keshub by her article on "Keshub Chunder Sen" in the pages of *East and West* of September 1903. We cannot but be sufficiently thankful to this friend and admirer of Keshub of the *West* for appending in her article two letters from the pen of the great Minister to her, explaining the whole affair of the Cooch Behar marriage.

This article of Miss Cobbe with the Minister's two letters from the *West* reminds us of the prophecy of the great master Keshub made in one of his daily prayers, *Satyayugair Somagum* (Advent of the Age of Truth):—"The New Dispensation will flow, like the river Ganges from the Himalaya, from province to

province in the East and the West. \* \* \*  
 We see the sweet face of the Divine Mother which  
 one day the people of Europe and America will  
 see." \* \* \* \*

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## MISS COBBE

ON

## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

It would be a great mistake for any one to treat the career of Keshub Chunder Sen as, on the whole, a failure. His earnest goodness, the purity of all his aspirations and his fervent piety, must have helped to kindle in many hearts—as they did in mine—the sparks of devotion and faith. How much of actual religious zeal now exists in the Brahma Somaj. I am not in a position to judge ; but whatever be the height of the sacred flame of such sentiments in that body, much of it must, I am convinced, be due to him who lighted it up with his ardour thirty years ago.

Yet whatever still remains of his influence, one of the saddest disappointments of life to many of us was the break-down of our hopes of what Keshub was destined to do before he passed away from this world. To some of us he seemed the "later Luther," who would purify India from idolatry and create a new Reformation. Others of us thought of him as one of those who (as the old Chaldean Oracle said) "receive truth through themselves"; and whose transparent spirituality enabled him to convey to more mundane souls the direct and highest teaching of religion. But,

suddenly and wholly unexpectedly, a cloud gathered over him ; he passed under a shadow, and, before it had lifted, death had borne him away from earth, leaving his work abruptly ended. \* \* \*

In looking over a collection of old letters addressed to me by many eminent men and women of the past Victorian age, it has struck me that it would only be an act of loyalty to the memory of my old friend, if I should publish, in his own country, some of his communications to me, and especially, his final letters of 1878, telling me at full length the motives for his conduct in the one questionable incident of his life, namely, his consent to the marriage of his daughter with the Rajah of Cooch Behar. \* \*

That he considered that the course he adopted was incumbent on him as a *public* man, and was a part of his *public* duty, is made perfectly plain by this remarkable letter of 26th April, 1878 ; and I shall be glad if the appearance of it in the *East and West*, may serve to clear away whatever mists still hang over the memory of this good and pure-hearted man. In a recent article concerning him in the same magazine, although a high eulogium winds up the memoir, no effort has been made to vindicate his action, or to explain what really happened on the occasion which gave a handle to misconstruction. I believe and hope that his own simple account of the matter, given to a friend like myself in whom he placed confidence, will be his best apology, if absolute justification be not available. Not for the first or last time alas !

in the world's history may it have happened that grievous mistakes and downfall have followed from the ethical error that *Social* duty comes before *Personal*, and that a public advantage may lawfully be sought, or allowed to over-ride, the soul's own law of Truth, and Purity and Justice ; in other words, that it is ever possible for us to *do* good in any more effectual way than by *being* good to the summit of our moral ideal.

Notwithstanding the unique elevation of . Keshub's whole character, it may be admitted, perhaps, that he was somewhat deficient in firmness—in what we English are wont to speak of as “backbone.” He would (I have no shadow of doubt) have gone bravely to the stake as a martyr for his creed ; but he could, and perhaps did, suffer himself to be overborne by the will of high and imposing officials and their persuasions. This, I know, to have been the opinion of many of his warmest English admirers. I have been myself inclined to wish that instead of a high-born Bengali gentleman, with (as he told me) a pedigree of 800 years, he had had a little infusion of the blood of sturdy Saxons or stiff-necked Scots ! But I am still more disposed to think that his fatal practice of abstinence from needful food and sleep, that “culpably weakening of our powers entrusted to us for good” (as Zoroaster describes asceticism), had not a little share in his weakness.

Before quoting the larger part of Keshub's letter to me, I shall extract from the volumes of my own *Life*, published ten years ago, some description of him as I

saw him in London in 1870, and of the impression he then made upon me and also on my friend, Rev. William Henry Channing, who several times shared our long conversations in my drawing-room, in south Kensington :—

EXTRACT FROM THE "*Life of Frances Power  
Cobbe by Herself.*" VOL. 2, CHAPTER  
XVII.—"*London in the Sixties and  
Seventies.*" (P. 133.)

\* \* \* \* \*

My chief Eastern visitors, however, were the Brahmos of Bengal, and one or two of the same faith from Bombay. They were very remarkable young men at that date, members of the 'Church of the One God,' nearly all of them having risen from the gross idolatry in which they had been educated into a purer Theistic faith, not without encountering considerable family and social persecution. Their leader, Keshub Chunder Sen, at any other age of the world would have taken his place with such prophets as Nanuk (the founder of the Sikh religion), and Gautama, or with the mediæval Saints, like St. Augustine and St. Patrick, who converted nations. He was, I think, the most *devout* man with whose mind I ever came in contact. When he left my drawing room after long conversations on the highest themes—sometimes held alone together, sometimes with the company of my dear friend, William Henry Channing—the impression left on me was one never to be forgotten. I wrote of

one such interview at the time to my friend Miss Lloyd as follows (April 28, 1870) :—

“ Keshub came and sat with me the other evening, and I was profoundly impressed, not by his intellect, but by his goodness. He seems really to *live in God*, and the single-mindedness of the man seemed to me utterly un-English, much more like Christ. He said some very profound things, and seemed to feel that the joy of Prayer was quite the greatest thing in life. He said : “ I don't know anything about the future, but I only know that when I pray I feel that my union with God is eternal. *In our faith the belief in God and in Immortality are not two doctrines but one.*” He also said that we must believe in intercessory prayer, else *the more we lived in Prayer the more selfish we should grow*. He told me much of the beginning of his own religious life, and, wonderful to say, his words would have described that of my own. He said, indeed, that he had often laid down my books when reading them in India, and said to himself : “ How can this Englishwoman have felt all this just as I ? ”

“ In his outward man Keshub Chunder Sen was the ideal of a great teacher. He had a tall, manly figure, (always clothed in a long black robe of some light cloth like a French *soutane*), a very handsome square face with powerful jaw, the complexion and eyes of a Southern Italian, and all the Eastern gentle dignity of manner. He and his friend Mozoomdar, and several others of his party spoke English quite perfectly,

making long addresses and delivering extempore sermons in our language without error of any kind, or a single betrayal of foreign accent. Keshub, in particular was decidedly eloquent in English. I gathered many influential men to meet him, and they were impressed by him as much as I was."

"The career of this very remarkable man was cut short a few years after his return from England by an early death. I believe he had taken to ascetic practices, fasting and watching, against which I had most urgently warned him, seeing his tendency towards them. I had argued with him that, not only were they totally foreign to the spirit of simple Theism, but dangerous to a man who, living habitually in the highest realms of human emotion, needed, *all the more for that reason*, that the physical basis of his life should be absolutely sound and strong, and not subject to the variabilities and possible hallucinations attendant on abstinence. My friendly counsels were of no avail. Keshub became, I believe, somewhat too near a 'Yogi' (if I rightly understand that word) and was almost worshipped by his congregation of Brahmos."

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## Chapter VIII

### KESHAB'S LETTERS TO MISS COBBE

(1)

*Calcutta, 29th April, 1878.*

My Dear Friend,—Your kind letter has given me great relief, for which I thank you most sincerely. In the midst of my present trials and difficulties it is truly a Godsend. My antagonists have impeached my character, showered upon me abusive epithets of all kinds, and represented me before the public as one who, for fame and wealth and worldly advantages, has unhesitatingly sold his conscience and his daughter ! This is indeed the substance of the charges preferred against me, and an insinuation to this effect is to be found, I am told, in the so-called Protest. If my conscience acquits me, none can convict me. Of this I am sure, that I never sought a Rajah. I never coveted filthy lucre. As a private man I should not probably have acted as I have done. But I was acting all along as a public man, and one course only was open to me. The British Government sought me and my daughter ; a Christian Government that knew me thoroughly to be a Brahmo leader, proposed the alliance, and the weighty interests of a State were pressed upon me with a view to induce me to accept the proposal and make the needful concessions. I found such arguments as these placed before me :—



" Here is the Cooch Behar State, the den of ignorance and superstition, with a corrupt court given to dissipation, polygamy, intrigue and oppression. The young Rajah has been saved by the British Government acting as his guardian. The women of the Raj family have been mostly removed to Benares, and others will follow. The administration of the affairs of the State has greatly improved in all departments, education, police, revenue, health, etc., under the management of competent officers appointed by the British Government. The old palace will be pulled down shortly, and a new palace will be erected at a cost of about Rs. 8,000,000. Not a vestige will remain of the old *regime* and the ground will have been thoroughly cleared for political and social improvements where the young Rajah will be formally installed and begin to govern his immense territory. It is desirable, it is of the utmost importance, that he should have an accomplished wife. Should he marry a girl of 7 or 8 in the old style, the effects of the education he has hitherto received will be neutralized, and he will surely go back into the evil ways from which he has been saved. A good and enlightened wife, capable of exercising always a healthy influence on the Rajah, is the " one thing needful in the Cooch Behar State." The Government in presenting these arguments before me seemed to ask me whether I would give my daughter in marriage to the Maharajah and thus help forward the good work so gloriously begun in that State by our benevolent rulers in the interests of millions of the subject population. I could not

hesitate, but said at once, under the dictates of conscience, "Yes." You have justly said that a grave responsibility would have rested upon me had I refused the overtures of the Government. In fact, I wonder how you have so clearly realized this position, and so fully grasped the real secret of the whole affair. I have acted as a public man under the imperative call of public duty. All other considerations were subordinated to this sacred call, this Divine injunction. I saw, I felt that the Lord had himself brought before me, in the strange ways characteristic of His providence, the young Maharajah of Cooch Behar for alliance with my daughter. Could I say "No"? My conscience bade me obey. And there I was, an enchained victim before a strange and overpowering dispensation of the living providence of God. I did not calculate consequences, though most beneficial results I could not fail to foresee; I did not go through elaborate logical processes of thought, I did not refer to others for advice, though I saw clearly that the contemplated step involved risks and hazards of a serious character, as the Rajah was an independent Chief and might fall back upon evil customs prevalent in his territory. I trusted, I hoped with all my heart that the Lord would do what was best for me, my daughter and my country. Duty was mine, future consequences lay in the hands of God. So I acceded to the main proposal of the Government, and negotiations went on between myself and the Deputy Commissioner. It was at first proposed that the Rajah should marry under the

Marriage Act and the Government made no objection. I was assured that the Rajah had no faith in Hinduism, but a *public* renunciation of the Hindu faith was objected to on political grounds. Mr. Dalton wrote to me, "As a fact, he does not believe in it (Hindu religion), but profession and faith are two very different things." He added, "These are difficulties, but I think they may be got over, and when you reflect on the benefits to the cause of enlightenment which may result from this marriage, I feel sure you will smooth our way as far as you can even to the extent of conceding somewhat to Cooch Behar's superstition. The greatest difficulty I see in the way is the public declaration to be made in Cooch Behar by the Rajah that he does not profess Hinduism. If that can be dispensed with, I think, other difficulties may be got over. You must remember that Act III of 1872 does not apply to Cooch Behar and that there will be nothing illegal in leaving out this part of the programme." (Deputy Commissioner's letter, dated Calcutta, 24th September, 1877.) Touching the match itself and the question of rites, the following occurs in the same letter :—"The Commissioner, Lord Ulick (Browne), has written to me expressing his warm approval of the proposed engagement, and asking me to obtain from you in writing 'what you require, that is to say, to state in writing the points in which the celebration of the marriage must differ from the Hindu ceremony."

You will see from the above that at the very first stage of the negotiations, I was satisfied that the Rajah

was not a Hindoo, that in the marriage rites there was to be a departure from established Hindoo ceremony, and that it was the intention of the Christian British Government that I should, with due regard to the beneficial effects likely to accrue from the marriage, smooth the way as far as I could, consistently with my own religious convictions, by making small concessions to local prejudices and superstitions. In other words, I should, without compromising my or my daughter's faith in Brahmoism, tolerate certain minor usages which were only childish and unreasonable. All this was encouraging at the outset, and greatly inspired my confidence. In a subsequent letter occur the following words:—"The Rajah showed no distaste whatever to a Brahmo marriage." The project of solemnizing the marriage under the Act was afterwards given up as the law was declared to be inapplicable to Cooch Behar, and the Government, at the instance of the Maharajah's mother, wanted him to marry before proceeding to Europe. I of course objected to the marriage taking place so soon, but Mr. Dalton met the objection thus:—"I know, it will seem difficult to you to arrange for a wedding on the 6th March, and also that the idea of marrying your daughter before she has completed her fourteenth year is repugnant to you. But consider the circumstances that in fact the marriage will not be a marriage in the ordinary acceptation of the term, but a solemn Betrothal, the Rajah proceeding to Europe immediately after the ceremony." It was on this ground that I acquiesced at last in the

proposal of fixing the 6th March for the marriage. A betrothal is unobjectionable on moral grounds, and technical points of law are nothing to those who are guided by the moral law. This is quite an exceptional case, and it would be improper to stick to the letter of the law in preference to the spirit. Besides as I myself got the Marriage Act passed, I of all others should know its true scope and the essential moral principles upon which it is based. I was anxious to prevent Native girls from marrying before the age of puberty, and the reform movement I headed, was directed only against this evil, as will appear from the published report of the Indian Reform Association. From that position I have not receded, and the charge of inconsistency I therefore deny unhesitatingly. In this present instance of mere betrothal there is no early marriage, and nothing like a sacrifice of principle. Is it not a fact that the Rajah left Calcutta for Europe on the 18th of March, only twelve days after the marriage? Surely, enlightened men in England would not regard a mere betrothal as a premature *marriage*. As regards the charge of idolatry subsequently brought against the marriage rites, it will appear on a perusal of the "Statement" in the *Indian Mirror* to be equally unfounded. In confirmation of the arguments in the above paper I need only quote the following testimony from the Deputy Commissioner's telegrams dated 4th February :—"Anticipate no further difficulty. Pundit started yesterday for Calcutta to arrange marriage formula of ceremony on basis heretofore approved by you, *viz.*, Hindu form, *idolatrous*

*portion omitted.*" 23rd February :—"Hindu ceremony *minus* idolatrous *muntras*." Thus I had the assurance of the Government itself that there would be no idolatry, and it is a fact that Brahmo rites *were* observed on the occasion. The letters and telegrams above alluded to are all private and confidential, and I fear we have no right to publish Mr. Dalton's words. I have received a kind letter from Dr. Martineau.

Yours most sincerely,  
KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

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(2)

Lily Cottage, 72, Upper Circular Road,  
*Calcutta, 3rd May, 1878.*

My dear Friend,—I wrote my last letter in great haste, and I fear I omitted one or two important facts, which I hasten to supply. Of the thirteen proposals mentioned in the "Statement," I give below the first two :—

1. "I am told that the Maharajah is not an idolater, and that he believes in the One True God. I should like to have a declaration from him in writing that he is in his heart a Brahmo or Theist." . . . . .

2. "I hope the Maharajah will not object to give me an assurance in writing in the form of a letter that he will not marry a second wife during the life-time of the first wife."

In compliance with the above conditions, the Maharajah wrote as follows (Dated the 8th February, 1878) :—"I believe in One True God and I am in my

*heart a Theist.* \* \* \* *It has always been my opinion that no man should take more than one wife.*" ("Strictly Confidential.") \* \* \*

I give you the above extracts from private letters with a view simply to strengthen your hands in the present controversy. You may use the facts but not the words. The Maharajah verbally assured me, when I solemnly put the question in the presence of the Agent of the Government as to what his faith was, that he was a "Brahmo," and that he had been a Brahmo for some time. He used to attend the Cooch Behar Brahmo Somaj now and then. And when in Calcutta, before the marriage, he often attended family prayers at my house. Perhaps the Government does not like that the Maharajah should take the Brahmo name, as that may mean an initiated Brahmo—one thoroughly identified with our Church. You know the Government, by its vow of religious neutrality, cannot allow its ward to make a *public* renunciation of his faith, as that might be construed into interference with the religion of the people. I mentioned Mr. Dalton's arguments, in my last letter, on this subject. But there is no objection to the word "Theist." It may be the Maharajah has been instructed by the authorities not to give himself out as an initiated Brahmo, as I hear there was some correspondence of the subject. But the Maharajah told me distinctly that though not formally initiated, he was a "Brahmo." The difference between "Brahmo" and "Theist" is unreal and shadowy.

There is something important in the last letter of Mr. Dalton received immediately before the marriage

and making the final concession, which I must quote :—  
 " I consider that we are bound by terms of my telegram and letter—' void of idolatrous *muntras*,' and I cannot say conscientiously that the *Hom* is not in a manner idolatrous. . . . . In return for this concession I insist on everything in the marriage being purely Hindu, keeping of course to the original agreement *Ishwar* (God) for Bishtoo (Vishnu, Hindu Deity) etc." (Private letter.)

The Maharajah is expected in England early next month. He is, I believe, now in Paris, seeing the exhibition. I hope you will try to see him in London and say a few kind words. I thank you, honored friend, most heartily for your kind letter in the "Christian Life."

Yours sincerely,  
 KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

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## Chapter IX

### THE *SUBODH PATRICKA* OF BOMBAY ON MISS COBBE'S ARTICLE

Miss Frances Power Cobbe's article on Keshub Chunder Sen and the publication of some of the letters that she received from him will remind our too forgetful country-men of the great and pure soul that ended its holy mission in this world some twenty-five years ago. We do not know about other countries but here in India humanity has not as yet wiped out its great reproach which the saying 'a prophet is not honoured in his own country' implies. Except by a few notable persons neither the man nor his mission has in any way been adequately appreciated. Yet to those educated Indians who are spiritually inclined there is not a career in modern Indian history that can be more inspiring and enthralling. To the Brahmo Somaj his memory is peculiarly sacred. Every act of his life is a land-mark in the history of that movement. And when better times will dawn for this country, and a truer generation shall rise up better qualified to see and more ready to receive truth and righteousness, the memory of Keshub Chunder Sen will be duly honoured and his life and teachings will have a wider influence as a life-building power. Indeed Brahmanand Keshub's career is one of the mightiest hidden resources of this country.

But fortunately his countrymen are not the sole trustees of his sacred memory. Some of the best friendships of his life were formed in England. And it is his British friends—some of the foremost leaders of thought of the day—that appreciated him fully, admired him enthusiastically, sympathised with him in his tribulation when he was living, and now after his death are trying to clear away the mists and haze which his country in its ungratefulness has allowed to gather around his memory. And Miss Frances Power Cobbe is one of such. How he impressed his English friends Miss Cobbe states at the outset of the article :—" To some of us he seemed the 'late Luther' who would purify India from idolatry and create a new Reformation. Others of us thought of him as one of those who (as the old Chaldean Oracle said) 'receive truth through themselves'; and whose transparent spirituality enabled him to convey to more mundane souls the direct and highest teaching of religion."

The main interest of the article, however, lies in the explanation offered, of the one act of Keshub's life which has been a stumbling block to many of his admirers, and in the letters published to verify it. Miss Cobbe says that the Cooch Behar marriage is one more notable instance in history of the ethical error that gives *social* duty preference before *personal* duty, in other words, it is a result of the mistake of thinking 'that it is possible for us to do good in any more effectual way than by being good to the summit of our moral ideal.' It is, indeed, an interpretation

worthy of the unselfish and elevated life and character of Keshub Chunder Sen. Though pre-eminently a man of prayer, the deep moral life of Keshub felt forcibly the conflict in which personal and social claims meet in the higher regions of ethics. A man cannot serve two masters. Whether to obey the light in us or conceding a little to the weakness of our brethren help them to see the light has perplexed many a noble soul. But to the spiritual man this ethical problem has no meaning. It is our want of deep spiritual perception that makes two rival masters of fidelity to the God in us and service to our brethren. And Keshub Chunder Sen had that deep spiritual conviction. To the man who sees deep, and has mastered the very mysteries of life, faithfulness to God and service to man mingle into one harmonious self-dedication. The whole question then reduces itself to this :—Has Keshub Chunder Sen in serving his brethren always stood up to the full height of his moral stature ? A perusal of the letters published puts it beyond doubt that he did. If therefore, as he says in one of his letters, conscience acquitted him none can convict him.

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SCOTLAND'S WELCOME

TO

KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

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YE crack aboot the comin' man,  
But here's a chap frae Hindostan,  
As rare as need tae be ;  
I'd like the tawny hand tae grasp,  
O' this Hindoo Iconoclast—  
Nae hypocrite is he.

Ah ! Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen,  
Ye little ken the kind o'men  
Ye've come ower here tae see ;  
If no o' their partic'lar claith,  
Some saunts wud worry ye tae death,  
Sae mind yer weather e'e.

An' if yer face is unco black,  
They'll say yer partner tae the chap  
Wha rules the place below.  
Tae mak' things waur, yer name sounds queer—  
Enough itsell tae mak' them swear  
That ye're wi' him in Co.

Some say the Oriental mind  
Is rather vicious an' confined,  
Which pairtly true may be ;

But ye've a mind baith 'cute an' large,  
An' abler for the pastoral charge  
Than mony that we see.

Bauldly speak yer ain opinions,  
Mind ye're in oor Queen's dominions,  
An' that while here ye're free—  
Free tae reject or tae receive,  
Free tae deny or tae believe  
Whatever taks yer e'e.

Ye're no compelled tae hide yer creed,  
Or act the hypocrite for bread,  
Like some puir deevils here.  
If we should differ frae the crowd,  
We have tae hide below a cloud,  
An' daurna speak for fear.

Oor country's creed we maun believe,  
If no, we'll famish, and get leave  
Tae stand oot i' the cauld.  
Some men their secret thochts reveal,  
An' for their pains get skelpit weel ;  
But few ye'll find sae bauld.

Oor missionaries went tae you—  
They ca'ed ye heathen then ; but noo  
They'll hae tae change their tune.  
Through the mire ye've trailed the robes  
O' Hindoo priests, an' made their gods  
Tae tremble in their shoon.

In your high mission persevere,  
Though men oppose you, never fear—  
Success yer wark maun croon.  
The errors o' yer native land,  
The gods that in its temples stand.  
Maun a' come tum'lin donn.

JOSEPH TEENAN

East-Linton, Prestonkirk,  
August 1870.

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—*Re-Printed from The Scotsman, Friday, 19th  
August 1870. (Edinburgh.)*

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## FAREWELL SOIREE TO MR. SEN

(1)

The committee who have been acting in England in behalf of the Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen gave last night a farewell soiree in the Hanover-square Rooms, which was largely and influentially attended. After a run of short addresses, one of which, from your London representative, acknowledged the temperance services of the Baboo, the guest of the evening spoke for an hour and a half in a strain, first of lively humour on some of the superficial aspects of our social life; then, with pathetic power, upon the shadows and lights of our national estate; and, lastly, with a noble religious fervour, upon the necessity of a deeper cultivation of spiritual fellowship, and a truer apprehension of the spiritual realities, which are the most absolute and important of all. It was pleasant to hear

from his lips a reiteration of his hope that our Government and people would soon deliver themselves from any connection with the causes of intemperance. All his allusions to this topic were warmly received, but a little more warmly, it struck me, by a section of the general audience than by the platform. The Baboo sails on Saturday, and will bear with him a multitude of prayers for a rapid voyage and a great career in the land he loves so well.—*The Alliance News*.

## (2)

It is good for us at times to have a peep at ourselves through other people's spectacles. It is natural that we should think there are few people like us, and that, although we may have our faults, they are by no means such huge ones as the faults of other nations. We will not believe that it is in our eye that the beam is : we have got the mote only ; it is our brother who has got the more bulky impediment to sight ; and the opinion of an " intelligent foreigner " respecting us tends to correct our self-exaggerations. Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen has been taking stock of us during the last six months ; and he delivered his verdict at a farewell *soiree* at which he was entertained in the metropolis on Monday night. It is gratifying to know that we are not so black in the estimation of our visitor as we have been painted by others who have taken stock of us. Mr. Sen was struck with the brilliancy and splendour of our shops, the multitude of our advertisements, and the feverish activity of our people. John Bull appeared to him to be made for work—

eternal, everlasting work. Our performances too at the dinner-table made his flesh creep. Yes, we are good eaters ; hard work and hard eating generally go together. Then our ladies ! He hopes the English Girl of the Period won't go to India. Ladies should not, in his opinion, occupy more space than men ; but a refined West-End lady occupies at least five times as much space as a man. Our poverty, pauperism and intemperance pained him, but as a set-off to these there is our great charity. The English home, he thinks, is a great institution : English public opinion is a great power ; but English and Western Christianity is not large enough and broad enough for human hearts and souls. The substance of Mr. Sen's criticism is, that we are by no means so perfect as we might be, but that we have our good points. We have no reason to complain of our critic, who is an earnest-minded man, and who, we trust, will get safe home to his own great country, and be a centre of good there.

—*The Christian Times.*

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LETTER OF SYMPATHY FROM PROFESSOR  
F. MAX MULLER TO MINISTER KESHUB  
AFTER HIS RETURN FROM ENGLAND

" You may have wondered that I should never have written to you since you left England to return to your own country and your own work among your own people. I have often thought of you, and wherever my memory went on a long pilgrimage to my friends who are doing good work in different parts of the world, I



always lingered before your image, and wondered whether I could and ought to help you in your struggles as they grew harder from year to year. But as our span of life grows smaller and smaller, work seems to grow thicker and thicker. If we want to do anything, to finish anything at least up to a certain point, we must learn to let many things take their own course. We must learn to trust—and I can assure you that ever since I saw you face to face, ever since I listened to you pleading your cause so powerfully before our great theologian Dr. Pusey, and afterwards unfolding to me your brightest hope for the future of India, I have always trusted you. That does not mean that I have always approved of all that you have written or done. Far from it. But with regard to most of the matters which have been discussed between you and your opponents, what right had I to condemn the steps which you thought it right to take, or, at all events, to put my judgment against yours. I do not call that trusting our friends, if we want them always to think and speak and act exactly as ourselves would think and speak and act. Trusting our friends means to give them credit for good and honest intentions, even where we differ from them and they from us. It is easy to trust in a Divine Providence, if all goes well with us ; but to trust when all goes against us, that is real trust. It is the same with our faith in men. I know that your one object in life is to do good to your countrymen, to help them to amend certain defects in their social life, and to purify their religious ideas ; and I shall never believe

that a man who has devoted his life to so noble a purpose, can be guilty of the charges brought against you. I never shall think you infallible in your judgments, but whatever may happen, I trust, aye I know, that you will always remain true to your noble self."

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## **Chapter X**

### **ESTIMATION OF KESHUB BY EUROPEANS**

**MR. T. E. STEPHENS, J. P. OF THE NATIONAL  
LIBERAL CLUB, LONDON, ON  
KESHUB CHUNDER SEN, 1910**

The 40 years which have passed since the memorable visit to England of Keshub Chunder Sen, may not, according to English tradition, be absolutely sufficient to estimate the exact place he will permanently fill in the ranks of the great men of the world. It is proverbial with us that at least a century is required to do so.

But there is sufficient ground for asserting after the experience of those 40 years during which he has been indisputably recognised as "India's greatest son," to predict, that, at the end of the century he will still hold that place in the estimation of his fellow-countrymen, as being the greatest spiritual prophet, patriot, and reformer that India has ever produced.

England owes him a debt of gratitude not only for his direct, but also for the influence of his indirect teaching.

As one of the diminishing number of the survivors of 40 years ago who came under his influence and the charm of his personality the writer deems it a privilege to do homage to his name, on this day which is consecrated to his memory as the anniversary of his ascension to the Higher Life.

The personality of any Eastern prophet, visiting a Western nation in the 19th or 20th Century, must always be identified with his work in contemporary history.

This was more particularly so in the case of Keshub Chunder Sen than with any other great Thinker and Teacher who has visited England for the last 60 years at least.

His was a personality, like his teaching, quite exceptional and unique. The impression he made could never be forgotten by those in natural sympathy with ideals and aims, and correctly understanding the man. To look at him was a revelation ; to hear him was a privilege ; but to speak with him was to bring yourself into communion with one who seemed to be already living the higher life of the spirit, whilst in the world of men and human affairs.

Only to those who thoroughly understand the depth of his spiritual nature, and his remarkable insight into what was hidden from ordinary men could he be correctly interpreted.

The first time the writer had the advantage of coming into close personal contact with him was on the occasion of his first public address in the north of England at that great commercial centre Liverpool, and the place was the Liverpool Institute.

The occasion was especially noteworthy for the many learned and honoured names surrounding the distinguished Indian visitor upon the platform, in the front rank of whom was the revered " Philosopher and

Saint," James Martineau, fittingly described at his death as "An intellectual King of Men"; Martineau's presence was an assurance to all educated men that the occasion was a memorable one, and the visitor a man worthy of his own distinguishing presence.

The Hall of the Institute was packed from floor to ceiling. Though none were out of sympathy, many came merely to satisfy an intelligent curiosity and others to criticise.

An Indian Teacher in Western Europe! What could he teach but the lessons of Hindu mythology, or the moral deductions of the Vedic hymns!

Had not Europe reached a higher plane than that?

Did we require to go backward Eastward, instead of onward Westward, with modern civilization and the course of the sun, to make up any deficiencies in our Moral, Religious, and Patriotic learning?

Had Christianity fallen so short in the lessons of its Prophet of Nazareth that we now needed a Teacher from the shores of the Ganges to point our way?

These were some (as the writer remembers them) of the questionings of many in the great audience of that day whilst awaiting the appearance of the distinguished visitor.

As he entered the Hall with the Chairman on his left and Martineau on his right, you at once felt you were in the presence of a man of wisdom and insight. This impression grew upon you during every moment of that meeting.

A commanding figure, well proportioned, in his Eastern garb so becoming to him, with a face beautifully moulded into classic expression placid and serene, with that true humility which bespeaks intellectual greatness, you felt, as his presence grew upon you, that you might have only "to touch the hem of his garment" to catch something of the apparently divine sanctity of his life.

Everything about him lent itself to this feeling, and his pensive thought brought an expression to his features that spoke more eloquently than words that he was full of tenderness and compassion for all men, and that his real life was inward and not outward.

As the writer came more into touch with this remarkable man whose whole work created that impression he was more and more convinced of the absolute truth of a Philosopher-poet's words he had committed to memory at college, and with only slight variation came spontaneously to him the more he saw and felt the influence of Keshub Chunder Sen :

"Two lives the greatest and the meanest of us live,

One which the world beholds—and one

Whose Inner meaning none can give

Save he who lives it—he alone."

In an address of a little more than an hour—all too short to those who heard it,—the preconceptions and prior criticisms of many of the audience were dispelled and dissolved by the convincing oratory of this remarkable Prophet and Teacher to whose memory

we pay our gratified tribute of love and gratitude to-day.

Throughout this never-to-be-forgotten oration he held his audience spell-bound and enraptured. His voice so melodious and persuasive, seemed like music to responsive ears ; and his words themselves at times were heard as if they were descending from a region of light and glory which the audience had not before experienced. Here was a man the charm of whose personality and the chaste beauty of whose language was stirring not only the minds, but the souls of his hearers.

His mastery of the English language was complete and the selection of the most appropriate terms of it to carry conviction to his audience, remarkable, whilst withal, the simplicity of the sentences spoken, removed all embarrassment from the least cultivated mind present.

He had proved himself an Orator of the first rank in one hour, and stamped his impress upon his audience, without the slightest effort for display or oratorical effect.

At its conclusion James Martineau paid a beautiful tribute to the remarkable address to which he had listened with such profound admiration of both the orator himself, and the conclusions enunciated. He likened him to a second Paul bringing refulgent light from the East to the comparative darkness of the West.

So great was the impression produced upon the writer—then thirsting for Eastern illumination—that he felt an irresistible impulse compelling him to follow Keshub Chunder Sen in all his subsequent sojourning in England, that such an occasion of hearing at every stage so great a scholar, orator and Teacher, should not be missed, as the opportunity was never likely to come again.

All his subsequent addresses in England and Scotland created the same impression, to those who correctly interpreted him, and understood him. He proved the trust of Professor Max Muller's estimate of him as India's greatest son.

Those, or some of those addresses have happily not been lost but published in London in recent years. But those who *heard*, and those who *read* them are entirely different audiences. The former were associated with the personality of the man, the latter deprived of it. They will live, however, as one of the many monuments of his greatness to future generations—not only to members of the Brahmo Somaj, but to a vastly wider range of readers who will bind India and England in closer bonds of love and sympathy.

The teaching of Keshub Chunder Sen in England has never been forgotten by his educated survivors.

But more valuable than his direct teaching was the influence it had in breaking down many mental barriers of racial and national prejudices which had long prevailed in Europe respecting India and the East generally. These prejudices fell wherever he spoke.



They have continued to fall ever since. The expression of one highminded friend of the writer hearing the great Teacher several times was typical of probably many thousands of others to the same effect. "Well," said he, "if India can produce such a splendid man as that, then we ought to be proud of India and love its people not only as our kindred but as brothers and sisters." That was one of the results Keshub Chunder Sen sought to achieve.

He laid the permanent foundation of a wider love and deeper soul-sympathy between England and India than any one before him.

He—and he alone—inaugurated that wider soul-sympathy which permeated our Colleges and Universities—our schools of law and medicine and of science and art, wherever Professors and students co-mingled in the pursuit of their studies. Indians and the English formed closer bonds of attachment than ever before as the indirect influence of the teaching of the master-mind Keshub Chunder Sen.

This influence—capable of universal expansion—is, in the writer's judgment, the transcendent glory of his life and work.

May it continue to expand until the full consummation of the great prophet's hope shall be realized, that, England and India shall be *one—one* in spiritual love and intensity of purpose for the uplifting of men from the errors of the past—*one* in soul-sympathy with every effort for good, not only for Englishmen and Indians, but for the various races of mankind.

REV. J. T. SUNDERLAND  
OF AMERICA

ON

KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

The honor is much appreciated by me, of being invited to contribute something regarding that great religious teacher of India who is honored and loved, not only by thousands in his own land, but by many in this distant part of the world. I fear that what I shall be able to say will be of very little value or interest; but at least it will be the sincere word of one who fully forty years has held Keshub Chunder Sen in great esteem and reverence, and who would gladly offer a tribute of affection, however humble, to his memory.

I never heard or saw this great and good man. I was not in England when he made his famous visit there. He desired at that time to come to America, but his stay on this side would necessarily have been so short that it did not seem wise to his English friends for him to undertake it. So he was persuaded to relinquish the idea, though he expressed himself as not quite happy in so doing. I believe that up to nearly the end of his life he did not wholly relinquish the dream of visiting this New World. If he had come of course I should have seen and heard him. And what a host of admirers and friends he would have found here! for his fame had already reached America. The great impression that he made in England and the warm

reception that he met with there, were reported on this side and his remarkable addresses were more or less fully reproduced in our periodical press. From that time on, his fame grew steadily here, as well as in England and on the continent of Europe. Great scholars and students of Oriental religions like Professor Max Muller and Sir Monier Williams, wrote in his praise. Travellers in India brought back word of his growing power and influence. Christian missionaries, who had gone to India from this country, wrote, and when they returned home, told about him and about the religious movement which he was leading with such success,—sometimes generously praising him as a real reformer and a true benefactor of India, even though he did not call himself a Christian; but, quite as often, I am sorry to say, criticising him as an enemy, of Christianity, dangerous because of his great ability, and rendered even more dangerous by the very fact of his seeming to be so kindly disposed to Christianity and so appreciative of much that is in it.

When Mr. Mozoomdar came to America as he did three times, and spoke with such noble eloquence at our great World's Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in 1893, and lectured and preached with such spiritual power in many parts of the country, of course he gave us much knowledge, not only of the Brahmo Somaj, but of Keshub Chunder Sen, whom he held in such high esteem and honor. Indeed one of his lectures was upon Mr. Sen; and in articles published in the *Christian Register*, he gave extended accounts

of his life, character and work, and his family. One article I particularly remember was upon KESHUB'S MOTHER. \* \* \* \*

Of course it was a very great gratification, too, to meet the mother and brother of Keshub Chunder Sen, and also his wife and children. I think I may truly say that no places that I visited in Calcutta touched me quite so deeply as his birthplace, the room where he died, the beautiful chapel or "Sanctuary" which he built close beside his home, and the spot where his ashes rest. Of the mementoes of Calcutta that I brought away, the two that I most prize are a little book given me by the Maharshi—a precious little book of his own golden thoughts, and a set of the complete English works of Keshub, presented to me by his youngest brother. \* \* \*

From the first of my knowledge of Keshub Chunder Sen, I have greatly admired him for his extraordinary religious breadth, as manifested in his warm appreciation of and sympathy with what is best in all religions. Most religious teachers not only extol and magnify their own faith, but correspondingly disparage other faiths. Not so this great teacher of India. \* \* \*

I have always greatly admired Mr. Sen for his activity not only in religious but also in social, educational and political reforms. He was wise and great enough to see that these were vital needs of India, and he was brave enough to make himself their tireless advocate. He saw that the Indian people must be made intelligent,—that everything possible

must be done to give the blessing of education to all, even the poorest and humblest. He saw that it was absolutely essential for India to have intelligent women as well as intelligent men, and therefore that education must be provided for girls. He saw the far-reaching evils of child-marriage, and set himself to the difficult task of remedying them. He saw how seriously handicapped in a hundred ways India is by her system of caste, and made himself a stalwart leader in the battle against that. He recognized the growing evils of intemperance, caused largely, one regrets to say, by the drinking customs introduced into the land by Europeans, and by the policy of the Government in deriving revenue from licenses for liquor selling: and he lifted up his voice with no uncertain sound in condemnation of these. It was inspiring to see that he spoke as strongly on these subjects in England as he had done at home.

I always admired Keshub Chunder Sen for his loyalty to Asia. Few men of Asiatic birth have been more appreciative of Europe, or more ready to receive her rich contributions to civilization. But this did not make him ashamed of Asia, or forgetful of her great place in history, or neglectful of her claims upon him as her son. He remembered that however much Europe has done for the world's civilization, Asia has done more: and that however great has been Europe's contribution to the world's religion, Asia's has been almost incomparably greater. He bore in mind that Asia, not Europe, is the mother of civilization: and

that Europe's own religion is a gift to her from Asia. So with all his great love for Europe, he was never carried off his feet by her, or made untrue to his own continent.

I always admired his loyalty to his own land, India,—his deep love for her, his profound faith in her future, intellectual, religious and political, and his firm conviction that if the sun of her greatness had in any sense set, it would rise again with not less than its ancient splendor.

Christian though I am, I admired him for calling himself a Hindu, and never breaking the historic connection between the reformed and purified religion of Brahmoism which he taught and loved, and the old religion of his fathers. The great heritages which come down to us from revered ancestors through centuries and millenniums of time are too precious to be lightly esteemed. He deeply realized this, and notwithstanding his admiration for Christianity, and his acceptance of many of the teachings of its great founder, he remained true to the land of his birth and to his inheritances from the past, and declared as firmly in England as in India, "I am a Hindu." \* \* \* \* \*

I am convinced that among the religious leaders of the entire world during that important period he should be regarded as occupying a place not second in influence to any. I do not think that any nation of Europe or America produced within that time a more powerful religious orator, a truer prophet after the type of the Old Testament prophets and of Paul and

Jesus, or a more impressive and inspiring religious personality, than he who gave to the Brahmo Somai its great new birth of spiritual power and fervor, and who all through the sixth and seventh decades of the century so mightily stirred all India with an impulse toward religious and social reform.

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### REV. R. SPEARS (LONDON) ON KESHUB

I observe with pleasure that the British and Foreign Unitarian Association at the Council meeting on Tuesday next will move a resolution in memory of the late Keshub Chunder Sen. The London papers have lengthy notices this week, not a few of them leaders, on Mr. Sen and his movement in India. References are made to his visit to England in 1870. As I had the honor of entertaining Mr. Sen while in London several weeks at my home, and made all the arrangements for his visits to the provinces, the readers of the *Christian Life* may be gratified with a few of my reminiscences of his visit.

The *Daily News* has certainly the best description of Mr. Sen and the best history of his movement. We were struck with the correctness of the following :—  
 " He had many personal characteristics which fitted him for such religious work. A fine countenance ; a majestic presence, and that rapt look which of itself exerts an almost irresistible fascination over impressive minds, lent wonderful force to a swift, kindling and poetical oratory which married itself to his highly spiritual teaching as perfect music unto noble words."

He was very ready and apt at moralising on any passing event which would always make him a popular and useful preacher. I was with him when he witnessed the first fall of snow he had ever seen, and recollect how much he would have liked his family to have seen it. He moralised very beautifully on the scene it presented. He had a large fun element which English writers about him have not noticed. I recollect many of his merry moods and capital anecdotes. In one of his addresses in London he gave evidence of this in his graphic and amusing description of John Bull. He had also many a good laugh at one of his four companions who blamed me for never introducing him to that remarkable gentleman. Mr. Sen had been speaking of John Bull, for they were always desirous of sharing Mr. Sen's honours. He was also very playful with children, and of doing little tricks to please and interest them. I am not sure, but I believe he leaves a family of about ten children.

In nothing did he leave so sad an impression on my mind as by his account of the treatment of women in India, especially of widows. How almost every form of cruel treatment and neglect were endured by them as well as contempt ! A part of his mission was to reform this conduct, and I believe a great change is taking place. \* \* \* \* \*

Family life in England interested him very much. He often said it was the sweetest thing he had ever seen, and hoped some day the same might be realised in India. The number of respectable women walking



along the streets, ladies in fact, he viewed with some astonishment. One day, Prosonno, his companion, asked him when such a sight would be seen in the streets of India. He said emphatically, never.

The perfect trust we have in each other in England in the most important transactions was the subject of his frequent remark. Let me give an illustration. We had raised a sum of £500 as a present for him before starting for his home. He handed it to me that I might send it on to Calcutta. I took it to the bank, and asked them to make it payable to Mr. Sen in Calcutta. He enquired of me what assurance I had that they would pay him the money, for they refused to give any acknowledgment. This seemed to excite him. I told him that a million of money in their hands would be as safe as his £500 without any acknowledgment. He said he had never heard of such confidence as we seemed to put in each other, and I convinced him that this trust was the secret of our power, and the basis of all successful and united efforts. He prayed that some such spirit might one day be found in the East. There was nothing of this kind at present—too often suspicion of one another. I have heard missionaries say much the same thing—that the want of thorough truthfulness of an upright and downright frankness, was a serious drawback to prosperity in India and other eastern places.

It may be well just now to note that Mr. Sen and his companions always spoke well of the English judges who administered justice in India, and that they would

certainly rather have a case tried before such a judge than before any of the natives. No doubt the well-educated Indians feel that there should be greater confidence placed in their native judges. It would be well if, on this matter, we could have the opinion of the rank and file of the people. I merely name the fact as indicating with what reverence Mr. Sen spoke of our rule in India and of our judges there.

I am quite sure that the kind and liberal treatment of Mr. Sen while in England did much to increase the friendly feeling of "the cream of Hindu society" towards England, and that his preaching in the chapels of various sects exercised a powerful influence in bringing his thought into greater sympathy with our religion. I have many proofs of this, and also of the fact that his movement in India is preparing the way for the general acceptance of Christianity. One of his recent phrases is, "Christ has won India." The other two sections of the Brahmo Church are in much less sympathy with Christian thought.

Mr. Sen had one slight illness while in England. When at Liverpool he telegraphed me to come at once to him; for he had broken down. I went, and rearranged his plan of visiting the different towns, as he thought I had mapped out too much work for him. I told him I was afraid this break-down would be heard of by his family in India, and would alarm them. It was so, for I received at one o'clock one morning a telegram saying his illness was reported in the Indian papers. I sent back four very satisfactory words at a

heavy cost :—" Perfectly well ; preaching again." His mother is still living, a fine old lady, who was justly proud of her noble son. His death will be a terrible blow to her. He said to me he had an absolute reverence for his mother. His father died when he was an infant. \* \* \* \* \*

The Lord Mayor of London asked him and myself to one of the great Mansion House dinners. He was pleased to go and taste what he could conscientiously. He was much amused at the remark of one of the waiters to me, who said, "surely your friend will take a little fish, for that is pretty near vegetable food." To the homes of friends in the provinces who had invited him while on his tour, I, as a rule, sent a card of instructions concerning his diet ; this made his journeys pleasant. Mr. Mozoomdar was not a vegetarian, and obeyed the apostolic rule of eating what was set before him, asking no questions.

I am sure of one thing, that Mr. Sen must have everywhere impressed those who had to do with him with his conscientiousness, sincerity, piety, and thorough moral goodness. He was disposed to be very benevolent towards the beggars. It seemed to him a profession that he thoroughly revered ; for in India mendicity in many cases is regarded as meritorious. The beggar it is thought might do better for himself at some decent calling, but preferred this mode of life as being more lowly and religious. He could not understand the apostolic injunction, "A man who does not work should not eat."

I quite agree with Max Muller in his recent estimate of Mr. Sen when he says:—"If we look around for true greatness, not only in England or Europe, but in the whole civilised world, and if we try to measure such greatness, not by mere success or popularity, but honestly and, so to say, historically, taking into account the character of the work done, and the spirit in which it was done, few, I believe, would deny that it was given to Keshub Chunder Sen to perform one of the greatest works in our generation, and that he performed it nobly and well."

The *Times* also says, "It will be admitted that his objects were lofty. We doubt that posterity will be able to record higher praise of him than that he detected many of the evils under which his countrymen were suffering, and that he afforded and left them the example of a pure and laborious life. He found the Brahmo Somaj in existence, and he gave it a new impulse and direction ; but it may be that in doing so he contributed more than we can yet see with sufficient clearness to its eventual dissolution and disappearance. The true Hindoo reformer has yet to be revealed." I believe that no Hindoo reformer can do better than he has done ;—exalt the person of Christ as the way, the truth, and the life, as God's greatest and best gift to the world. It is simply impossible now in India or elsewhere to perform any higher office than this.

Mr. Joseph Cook, of Boston, very distinctly places Sen as the greatest man he met in India. Not a few

have blamed him for his sympathy with the Salvation Army. Have not bishops, statesmen, and distinguished Englishmen of nearly all Churches expressed most publicly large sympathy with the Salvationists without being insulted ? Nor can I understand the ungenerous-ness of always raking up the weakness of his daughter's marriage. Miss Cobbe and others in London defended the course he took. In the *Christian Life* I wrote pointedly against it. He also had the generousness to reprint in his paper every word of censure of mine. He said that the matter had perplexed him, and that he had made it the subject of prayer to God for direction. He believed in Divine Influence, and so do all of us who honestly pray. He believed that the marriage had the sanction of his heavenly Father, and ought to have his. \* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Sen profoundly loved his country, and liked to hear nothing but good of his people. When some of his companions would contrast our ways in England with doings in India, he was always ready to speak kindly of those who had been brought up under different influences. He once remarked to me, what a gulf there was between the priests of Hinduism, a class of men thoroughly ignorant and vicious, while our ministers were all educated men of fine moral feeling and noble life. He knew that Brahminism, as education and civilisation progressed, must be wiped out of India ; but he had a dread of mere materialism and atheistic speculations taking its place. This last case would be worse than the first.

More than once he said to me, that if the Unitarian Church could only send a class of preachers to India holding distinctly positive and Christian views they would work a great revolution. He thought the rite of baptism should not be insisted upon. \* \* \*

His visit to the Queen, at Osborne, was a great gratification. The Queen and Princess Beatrice talked much with him, and expressed the greatest possible delight at the portraits of himself, wife, and family which he presented to Her Majesty. The few weeks he stayed with me, the Queen sent him several presents, which he greatly prized. Other persons of rank paid him attention which he profoundly felt. He asked me to telegraph to his family, after he had been at Osborne, of the honour that had been done him, for he sincerely wished his mother, his wife, and children as well to share at once the joy that was his.

Now and then I showed him the charges made against himself about the homage, the prostrations, and the veneration of his followers to himself. He said : " Prostrations may appear curious to you, and even offensive ; yet, when I go home, the first act I shall do will be to humble myself at the feet of my mother. This is perfectly " legitimate," said he ; " no ideas of divinity are associated with such an act, and I keep clear on any undue homage being offered to myself." He lamented the childish and ridiculous charges levelled against him. I had it from the lips of Lord Lawrence, himself, how profoundly this distinguished man revered

and praised this Indian reformer for his character and his work. Can we wonder that his own countrymen revered him much—may be at times over much? He loved them and sought their good. Professor Max Muller, in an able memoir, says of him:—"India has lost her greatest son—Keshub Chunder Sen. He was one of the few names known not only widely among the 250 millions who are said to inhabit the vast Indian Empire, but familiar even to European ears."

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CELEBRATION OF MINISTER KESHUB'S  
ASCENSION-DAY IN LONDON  
(PROF. E. CARPENTER)

In commemoration of our Minister's ascension, a public meeting was held under the presidency of Sir R. K. Wilson Bart at Essex Hall on the 8th of January, 1906. The following letter from Professor Estlin Carpenter, which was read by Mr Bowie, was interesting:—

DEAR MR. BOWIE,—I am very sorry that my absence from home prevents me from responding personally to the invitation to the meeting on the anniversary of the death of Keshub Chunder Sen. No one who can recall, as I do, the effect of his noble enthusiasm, his splendid presence, his extraordinary eloquence, his exalted spirituality, can forget the

impression which he produced among us five-and-thirty years ago. Through the magic of his speech and the kindling power of his personality ran the force of one who lived in habitual communion with the Unseen. The sense of the Universal Presence of God, which was the heritage of the higher minds of his race, became with him a constant fellowship with an infinite and holy Spirit, manifesting his righteousness, his truth, his love, through the noblest characters and the loftiest thoughts of humanity. So he was drawn to the Gospels with a profound reverence for Jesus, and became to thousands among his countrymen the interpreter of Christianity, not as a creed or an ecclesiastical system, but as a spirit of life. Nor can we forget that he had won the respect of great English administrators as a prophet of reform and a leader in all that made for the intellectual and moral improvement of his people. He was deeply concerned for the poverty of the vast masses of the population of India ; but he was still more impressed with the urgent need of their spiritual development, and he attached especial importance to the education of women. In this country he uttered impassioned pleas for temperance and peace ; and his lofty call to Englishmen to recognise the responsibilities which have devolved upon them in the Government of the vast Empire beyond the sea, seemed to utter the voices of India herself, rising to a new self-consciousness of her needs and hopes. Separated by distance from him in his later days, we could not always understand his difficulties or follow his action.



But we must always recall with profound admiration and gratitude the way in which he made us feel that religion in England and in India is one. There are diversities of operations, but the same God worketh all things in all.

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BRAHMANANDA  
KESHUB CHUNDER SEN  
“Testimonies in Memoriam”

Vol. II  
BENGALI

কন্দ্ববীর মহাত্মা কেশবচন্দ্র সেন

( পণ্ডিত যোগেন্দ্রনাথ বিদ্যাভূষণ লিখিত ‘বীরপূজা’ হইতে )

ব্রাহ্ম-সৌরজগতের সূর্য্য রাজা রামমোহন রায়, পৃথিবী মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর এবং চন্দ্র কেশবচন্দ্র সেন। যেমন সূর্য্য আমাদের সৌরজগতের প্রসবিতা, সেইরূপ রাজা রামমোহন রায় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের স্রষ্টা বা প্রসবিতা। সূর্য্যমণ্ডল হইতে তেজোরশি বিনির্গত হইয়া যেমন গ্রহ-উপগ্রহাদির সৃষ্টি করিয়াছে, সেইরূপ সেই মহাপুরুষের আভার তেজের অনুক্রমে ব্রাহ্মসমাজের উৎপত্তি হইয়াছে। ভারতে এই নব-সূর্য্যের আবির্ভাবে এক নব-যুগের আবির্ভাব হইয়াছে। সে সূর্য্যমণ্ডল এক্ষণে ভূলোক ছাড়িয়া দ্যুলোকে অবস্থিত করিতেছেন বলিয়া অযোগী ব্যক্তি স্থল চক্ষুতে তাঁহাকে দেখিতে পাইতেছে না বটে, কিন্তু যোগিগণ যোগচক্ষুতে তাঁহার অধিকতর স্মৃতিত দিব্যমূর্ত্তি দর্শন করিয়া পরম আনন্দ লাভ করিতেছেন। ভূলোকের ব্রহ্মলীলা— দ্যুলোকের ব্রহ্মলীলা প্রতিবিম্ব মাত্র—স্বতরাং ছায়াবহুল ও গুণস্থায়ী। দ্যুলোকে ব্রহ্মের যেকোন লীলা হইবে—ভূলোকে তাহার প্রতিবিম্ব পড়িবেই পড়িবে। কিন্তু ছায়ালীলায়—বা ছায়াবাক্তী—গুণকালের জ্ঞান মাত্র লোকলোচনকে মায়ামুগ্ধ করিয়া দ্যুলোকস্থ—কূটস্থ—স্বাধারে বিলীন হইয়া যাইবে। তথায় উজ্জল নক্ষত্ররূপে বহুকাল বিরাজমান থাকিয়া সেই ব্রহ্মজ্যোতি-কলা—অব্যক্ত ব্রহ্মবিন্দুতে লয়প্রাপ্ত হইবে। এ ধরিত্রী যেমন সূর্য্যমণ্ডল হইতে বিক্ষিপ্ত তেজোরশির সমষ্টিমাত্র—

সেইরূপ মহসি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর মহাতেজাঃ রাজা রামমোহন রায় বিকীরিত তেজঃপুঞ্জের আধারমাত্র। যদিও ব্রাহ্মসমাজের আদি সূর্য্য দ্বালোকের গমন করিতেছেন—তথাপি তাঁহার তেজঃপুঞ্জ ঘনীভূত হইয়া মহসিতে বিরাজমান রহিয়াছে। তাহাতেই ব্রাহ্মসমাজ এখনও লয়প্রাপ্ত হয় নাই। মহসি ব্রাহ্মসমাজকে বক্ষে ধারণ করিয়া অন্তর্নিহিত তেজে মূহু অনুপ্রাণিত করিয়া রাখিয়াছেন।

এই ধরিত্রীর উভয় কেন্দ্রস্থিত দুইটি ঋবতারা—রামতনু লাহিড়ী ও রাজনারায়ণ বসু ভুলোক ছাড়িয়া দ্বালোকে গমন করিয়াছেন। ইহার একমাত্র শশী কেশবচন্দ্র সেন অমৃত-জ্যোতিতে কিছুকাল ভূমণ্ডলকে স্নিগ্ধ ও আলোকিত করিয়া দ্বালোকে গমন করিয়াছেন। ব্রাহ্ম-সৌরজগতের রবি-শশী অন্তর্মিত এবং তারাগণও এক একটি করিয়া অন্তর্মিত হইতেছেন। ধরিত্রীও জরাজীর্ণ। কে বলিতে পারে যে, ধরিত্রীর তিরোধানে ব্রাহ্মসৌরজগৎ প্রকাণ্ড হিন্দু সৌর-জগতের অন্তর্লীন হইবে না? ব্রাহ্মগণের বিপ্রকর্ষণী শক্তি সবেও প্রকাণ্ড হিন্দুসমাজের সঙ্কর্ষণ শক্তিবলে—ক্ষুদ্র সমাজ মহাসমাজের অন্তর্লীন হইবার অধিকতর সম্ভাবনা। এই দুইটি সমাজ বহুদিন হইতে পরস্পরকে কুক্ষিগত করিবার চেষ্টা করিতেছে। এক্ষণে যে যোগ্যতম, সেই বাঁচিবে—অপরটি নিশ্চয় উহার কুক্ষিগত হইবে।

রাজা রামমোহন রায়ের তিরোভাবের পর কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের জায় প্রতিভাশালী মহাপুরুষ ব্রাহ্মসমাজে আর আবিভূত হন নাই। মা ব্রহ্মময়ী তাঁহাকে নেতৃত্বোপযোগী সমস্ত গুণে বিভূষিত করিয়া পাঠাইয়াছিলেন। তিনি আশৈশব গম্ভীর, দূরবগাহ, স্থিরদী, দৃঢ়প্রতিজ্ঞ ও মন্ত্রগুপ্তি-পরায়ণ ছিলেন। আত্মহুপ্ত, আত্মপর্যাপ্ত ও আত্মভাবে মগ্ন—এরূপ দ্বিতীয় ব্যক্তি ব্রাহ্মসমাজে আর জন্মিয়াছিলেন কি না সন্দেহ। পরপ্রদর্শিত পথে গমন করা তাঁহার পক্ষে অসাধ্য না হইত—বিশেষ কষ্টকর বলিয়া নিবেচিত হইত। শ্রীকৃষ্ণ যেমন ব্রজের রাখালগণের সহিত পূর্ণ বালালীলা করিয়াও তাহাদিগকে কখন ধরা দেন নাই—কখন তাহাদিগকে বুকিতে দেন নাই যে, তিনি

ব্রহ্মের পূর্ণাবতার—সেইরূপ কেশবচন্দ্র সেন তাঁহার বালসহচরগণের সহিত পূর্ণ মিশিয়াও তাহাদিগকে কিছুতেই জানিতে দেন নাই যে, তিনি একজন অসাধারণ প্রতিভাশালী মহা-পুরুষ। মহাপুরুষগণ প্রায় সকলেই অল্প-বিস্তর পরিমাণে জাতিস্মর—অর্থাৎ তাঁহাদের পূর্বজন্মবৃত্তান্ত ও বর্তমান জন্মের ব্রতের স্মৃতি তাঁহাদের মনে সতত আগুরুক থাকে। কোন্ কোন্ জন্মে কি কি করিয়াছিলেন—এবং এই জন্মেই বা কি করিতে আসিয়াছেন—স্বপ্নবৎ সে সকল বিষয়ের স্মৃতি তাঁহাদিগের মনে সদা ভাসমান থাকে। দিগ্‌দর্শনের শলাকার ভায়ে তাঁহাদিগের মনের গতি সেই লক্ষ্যের দিকে—সেই মরণান্ত্র ব্রতের দিকে সদা স্থির থাকে। প্রথমে কেহ তাহা জানিতে পারে না—জানাইলেও বিশ্বাস করে না—বা বুঝিতে পারে না। ক্ষুদ্র শিলাখণ্ড যে কালে বিশাল গিরিমাল্য, কিংবা ক্ষীণা রজতসূত্রপরিমিতা নির্ঝরিনী যে দিগন্তব্যাপিনী মহানদীতে পরিণত হইবে—তাহা সহজে কেহ ধারণা করিতে পারেন না। গগনের মেঘনিঃসৃত রবিকণা হইতে যে মহাসাগরের উৎপত্তি হইয়াছে—এ কথা বলিলে বক্তাকে কে না বাতুল বলিয়া উপহাস করিবে? অথচ এই সকল কার্য্যাকারণভাব নৈজ্ঞানিকের নিকট স্বতঃসিদ্ধ সত্য বলিয়া গৃহীত হইয়া থাকে।

কেশব বাবু যে সমাজের নেতা হইবেন, তাহার আভাস তাঁহার বালাজীবনেই পাওয়া গিয়াছিল। তাঁহার সহচর-বৃন্দ তাঁহাকে প্রাণের সহিত ভালবাসিত—অথচ প্রাণ দিয়া তাহারা তাঁহার নিকট তাঁহার প্রাণ পাইত না! তাহারা তাঁহার নিকট তাহাদিগের অন্তরের দ্বার উদ্ঘাটন করিত—কিন্তু তাঁহার অর্গলবদ্ধ হৃদয়-মন্দিরে তাহারা কেহ প্রবেশ করিতে পারিত না। তাঁহার অসাধারণ প্রতিভা-জ্যোতিতে আকৃষ্ট হইয়া তাহারা তাঁহাকে নেতৃত্বপদে বরণ করিয়া-ছিলেন। তাঁহার আকর্ষণশক্তি অতিক্রম করিয়া যাওয়া তাহাদিগের পক্ষে অসম্ভব হইত। তাঁহার বয়োবৃদ্ধির সহিত এই আকর্ষণ-শক্তি ক্রমশঃ বর্দ্ধিত হইয়া চরমা কাষ্ঠা লাভ করিয়াছিল।

এই আকর্ষণ সঞ্চর্যণ শক্তির পূর্ণ বিকাশের জন্ত ভগবানের একটি নাম “রক্ষ” হইয়াছে। এই জন্তই আমরা প্রবন্ধান্তরে কেশব বাবুকে

‘কেশবাবতার’ বলিয়া নির্দেশ করিলাম। ইহা অপেক্ষা অধিক প্রশংসা মাহুষকে করা যাইতে পারে বলিয়া আমার ধারণা ছিল না। কেশব বাবুর এই সঙ্কল্পশক্তি তাঁহার যৌবনে ও প্রৌঢ়ে অতিশয় পরিপাকপ্রাপ্ত হইয়াছিল। নরনারী তাঁহাকে দেখিলেই স্বতই তাঁহার দিকে আকৃষ্ট হইত। তাঁহার স্নমধুর সারগর্ভ ও হৃদয়ের অন্তস্তলম্পর্শিনী বচন পরম্পরা শুনিলে চিত্ত স্বতই উন্মাদিত হইত। বোধ হইত যেন, তাঁহার মুগমগুল হইতে নিরন্তর অমৃতধারা-ক্ষরিত হইতেছে! যাঁহারা নিকটে থাকিতেন, তাঁহারা মনে করিতেন যেন অমর-কুণ্ড হইতে সুধা-ধারা বিনির্গত হইয়া তাঁহাদিগকে অভিষিক্ত করিতেছে। সমীপস্থ নরনারী সমভাবে ইহা অনুভব করিতেন—এই জ্ঞান তাঁহারা তাঁহার সঙ্গতাগ করিতে চাহিতেন না। অথবা তাঁহাকে তাগ করিয়া যাইবার তাঁহাদিগের শক্তি থাকিত না। তাঁহারা মন্থমুগ্ধের জায় তাঁহার নিকট বসিয়া থাকিতেন বা তাঁহার পশ্চাৎ পশ্চাৎ ধাবিত হইতেন। আমরাও এক দিন এই অবস্থায় পড়িয়াছিলাম—এবং তাঁহার প্রভাবে আত্মহারা হইয়া গিয়াছিলাম। মানব-সমাজের উপর এরূপ আধিপত্য করিতে আমি আর কোন বাঙ্গালীকে কখন দেখি নাই।

কেশব বাবুর নিকট আবাহন-বিসর্জন ছিল না। তিনি কাহাকে আহ্বান করিয়াও আনিতেন না, অথচ আসিলেও কাহাকে যাইতে বলিতেন না। অথবা একবার তাঁহার নিকট আসিলে—তাঁহার সহিত কথোপকথন করিলে কেহ আর তাঁহার সঙ্গতাগ করিয়া যাইতে পারিতেন না। প্রাতঃকাল হইতে রাত্রি ১০টা পর্য্যন্ত তাঁহার মন্দিরে এরূপ জনতা হইত যে, দেখিলে বোধ হইত যেন, কোন সমারোহ-ব্যাপার উপস্থিত। কিন্তু তাহা নহে—ইহা নিত্য ঘটনা হইয়া দাঁড়াইয়াছিল। তাঁহার এরূপ অসাধারণ ধৈর্য্য ছিল যে, তিনি সামান্য একটু দুগ্ধ পান করিয়া সমস্ত দিন লোকের সহিত কথাবার্তা কহিতেন—অথচ ক্লান্তি অনুভব করিতেন না। নানা লোকে নানা প্রশ্ন করিত; তিনি কাহারও উপর বিরক্ত না হইয়া সকলেরই প্রশ্নের যথাযথ উত্তর দান করিয়া শ্রোতৃবর্গকে পরিতৃপ্ত

করিতেন। যাহার যে বিষয়ে সন্দেহ উপস্থিত হইত—তিনি তর্ক ও যুক্তি দ্বারা সুমধুর ভাষায় তাহার সেই সন্দেহ ভঞ্জন করিতেন। সে সময় নাস্তিকতা ও সংশয়বুদ্ধির অত্যন্ত প্রাদুর্ভাব হইয়া উঠিয়াছিল। কেশব বাবু যেন সেই বিশ্বব্যাপিনী নাস্তিকতা ও সংশয়বুদ্ধি নিরসনের জগুই প্রাদুর্ভূত হইয়াছিলেন। যাহারা নাস্তিক বা সংশয়বাদী ছিলেন, তাঁহারা দলে দলে কেশব বাবুর শিষ্য হইতে লাগিলেন। নরনারী পরস্পর প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতায় তাঁহাকে গুরুপদে বরণ করিয়া তাঁহার চরণে পুষ্পাঞ্জলি প্রদান করিতে লাগিলেন। ব্রাহ্মণ, বৈষ্ণ, কায়স্থ প্রভৃতি উচ্চবংশীয় শিষ্যাগণ বর্ণনির্কির্শেষে তাঁহার পদধূলি গ্রহণপূর্বক তাহা অঙ্গরাগ করিয়া আপনাদিগকে কৃতকৃতার্থ মনে করিতে লাগিলেন। হিন্দু-সমাজ যেন টলমল করিতে লাগিল। প্রত্যেক হিন্দুপরিবার হইতে দুই একটি তারা পসিয়া ব্রাহ্মসমাজক্ষেত্রে পতিত হইতে লাগিল। চতুর্দিকে হলস্থূল পাড়িয়া গেল।

কেশব বাবু এই সময় আদিসমাজের উপাচার্য্য\* ছিলেন। আদিসমাজ বেদ, উপনিষদ ও তন্ত্রের ভিত্তির উপর ব্রাহ্মসমাজ-মন্দিরকে প্রতিষ্ঠাপিত করিয়া পরমরক্ষের উপাসনায় নিমগ্ন ছিলেন। ইহা তখন একটি শ্রেষ্ঠ উপাসক-সম্প্রদায়মাত্র বলিয়া উদ্বেষাধিত ও পরিগৃহীত হইয়াছিল। হিন্দুসমাজের সহিত এত দিন ইহার কঠোর সংঘর্ষ উপস্থিত হয় নাই। সাকার ও নিরাকার উপাসনা লইয়া উভয় সমাজে ঘোরতর বাগ্বিতণ্ডা উপস্থিত হইয়াছিল বটে, কিন্তু ব্রাহ্মসাধক সম্প্রদায় তৎকালে একটি স্বতন্ত্র সমাজে পরিণত হয় নাই। ইহা তখনও হিন্দুসমাজের অঙ্গীভূত ছিল। বর্ণাশ্রমের বিরোধী না হওয়ায়, হিন্দুসমাজ ইহাকে নিষ্কাশিত করে নাই। কিন্তু কেশবচন্দ্র সেন শাস্ত্র ও শাস্ত্রানুমোদিত বর্ণাশ্রমের গভীর ভিতর অধিক দিন থাকিতে পারিলেন না। তিনি হিন্দু-শাস্ত্র ও হিন্দুসমাজের অস্তিস্বরূপ বর্ণাশ্রমের বিরুদ্ধে অভূখিত হইলেই—মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের

\*কেশবচন্দ্র “আচার্য্য” ছিলেন—মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ “প্রধান আচার্য্য” ছিলেন।

সহিত তাঁহার মতবিরোধ উপস্থিত হইল। আদিসমাজ সনাতনধর্ম ও তদাশ্রিত হিন্দুসমাজের অস্থিমজ্জাভূত বর্ণাশ্রমের বিরোধী ছিলেন না। তাঁহারা কেবল সাকার উপাসনা বা পৌত্তলিকতার বিরুদ্ধে অভ্যুত্থিত হইয়াছিলেন মাত্র। সুতরাং বৈপ্লবিক কেশবচন্দ্র আর সে সমাজের উপাচার্য্য থাকিতে পারিলেন না। অগত্যা তাঁহাকে সেই সমাজ পরিত্যাগ করিয়া নূতন ব্রাহ্মসমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠাপিত করিতে হইল। এই নব ব্রাহ্মসমাজের নাম ‘ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজ’ হইল। কেশবের স্বাধীন চিন্তা পর-প্রবর্তিত পথে কখনই বিচরণ করিতে পারিত না। ‘মহাজনো যেন গতঃ সঃ পস্থা’—যে পথে কোন মহাজন গমন করিয়াছেন—সেই পথই প্রশস্ত পথ’ কেশব বাবু মহাভারতের এই সুবর্ণময় উপদেশ-বচন লঙ্ঘন করিয়া আপনার কক্ষ আপনি কাটিয়া লইলেন। ব্রাহ্ম-সৌরজগতের শরী নির্দিষ্ট কক্ষ-ভ্রষ্ট হইয়া নবকক্ষে ভ্রাম্যমাণ হওয়ার পর হইতেই ব্রাহ্ম সৌরজগতের সৌর্ভাব নষ্ট হইল। ইহার শক্তিসামান্য বিচলিত হইল।

প্রথমে বোধ হইল যেন, ব্রাহ্ম-সৌর-জগতের চন্দ্র কক্ষভ্রষ্ট হইয়া রবিকক্ষায় অনুক্রমণ করিয়াছে। যেন কেশবচন্দ্র সেন রাজা রাম-মোহন রায়ের শূন্য আসন অধিকার করিয়া বসিয়াছেন। পৃথিবীস্বরূপ মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ স্বচন্দ্র হইতে বিচ্ছিন্ন হইয়া যেন চিরস্থিতির আচ্ছন্ন হইলেন। যেন আদিসমাজকে চির-অমানিশা আসিয়া আলিঙ্গন করিল। সকলেই বিস্মাদে মগ্ন। আদিসমাজ যেন যায় যায় হইয়া উঠিল।

এ দিকে এই নব সূর্য্যের অভ্যাদয়ে ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজ অরুণ-প্রভা গারণ করিল। অসংখ্য নরনারী এই অরুণপ্রভায় উদ্ভাসিত হইয়া ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের অন্তর্ভুক্ত হইতে লাগিলেন। শাস্ত্র ও বর্ণাশ্রমের বাঁধ ভাঙ্গিয়া দেওয়ায়—একেবারে স্রোত প্রচণ্ডবেগে প্রবাহিত হইতে লাগিল। সেই প্রচণ্ড তরঙ্গের আঘাতে আদি-ব্রাহ্মসমাজ ও হিন্দুসমাজ চূর্ণ-বিচূর্ণ হইতে লাগিল। যাহা কিছু পুরাতন ও সনাতন—যাহা কিছু হিন্দুদের প্রাণভূত—সমস্তই এই

স্রোতের মুখে আসিয়া যাইতে লাগিল। বোধ হইল যেন, মহাপ্রলয় উপস্থিত। যিনি এ প্রচণ্ডবেগের সৃষ্টিকর্তা—তিনি রুদ্ধরূপী—তাঁহাকে বার বার ননঙ্কার করি।

অনন্তরূপী হিন্দুসমাজ আদিব্রাহ্মসমাজকে অনন্ত ফণায় ধারণ করিয়া এতদিন মহানিদ্রায় অভিভূত ছিলেন। এরূপ প্রবাদ আছে যে, অনন্ত দেব যখন ভূমণ্ডলকে এক ফণা হইতে ফণাস্তরে স্থাপিত করেন—সেই সময়েই ভূমিকম্প উপস্থিত হয়। কিন্তু এবার তাহার বিপরীত ঘটিল। এবার আদিব্রাহ্মসমাজরূপ ভূমণ্ডলের উৎকম্পে বাস্তবিক নিদ্রাভঙ্গ হইল। তিনি অনন্ত ফণাস্থিত অনন্ত লোচন বিক্ষারিত করিয়া আদিব্রাহ্মসমাজের দিকে কটাক্ষপাত করিলেন। আদিব্রাহ্মসমাজ ভয়ে কম্পমান হইয়া করষোড়ে অনন্তদেবকে বলিলেন যে—“আমার এই উৎকম্পের কারণ ঐ নবোদিত সূর্য্যের বিরীত আকর্ষণ।” তখন অনন্তদেবের রোমকথায়িত দৃষ্টি সেই নবোদিত সূর্য্যের ও তাহা হইতে উৎক্ষিপ্ত ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজরূপ নব সৌর-জগতের দিকে পতিত হইল। সেই অবধি কেশব-প্রতিষ্ঠাপিত ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজ অনন্তরূপী হিন্দুসমাজের বিষদৃষ্টিতে পতিত হইলেন।

অনন্তদেবের অনন্ত ফণার তর্জ্জন গর্জ্জন সত্ত্বেও ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজ কেশবচন্দ্রের প্রথর প্রভায় ক্রমশঃ পৃষ্ঠাবয়ব হইতে লাগিলেন। ইংরাজী শিক্ষা ও পাশ্চাত্য সভ্যতার প্রভাবে হিন্দুর শাস্ত্র, হিন্দুর দেবদেবী—হিন্দুর আচার-পদ্ধতি ও রীতি-নীতি—এবং হিন্দুসমাজের অস্থিমজ্জাভূত বর্ণাশ্রমের বিরুদ্ধে যেন সমস্ত শিক্ষিত-সমাজ অভ্যর্থিত হইয়াছিলেন। ইহার অন্তকূলে কেহ কোন কথা বলিলে তাঁহার মাথা রাখা ভার হইত। এই বৈপ্লবিক দল—শিক্ষিত নর-নারী—ক্রমে ক্রমে বৈপ্লবিক নেতা কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের পতাকায়ুলে আসিয়া দাঁড়াইলেন ‘ভাঙ্গ!—ভাঙ্গ!!—চুরমার করিয়া ভাঙ্গ!’—চতুর্দিকে এই বৈপ্লবিক রব শ্রুত হইতে লাগিল। বোধ হইল, যেন মহাপ্রলয় উপস্থিত। শঙ্কাম্পদ অনুরেবল্ গুরুদাস বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় প্রভৃতি



কতিপয় স্থিরবী আৰ্য্য নীরবে নিৰ্জনে হিন্দু ধৰ্ম্ম, হিন্দু বিস্মৃতিচাৰ—  
 রক্ষা করিয়াছিলেন! তদ্বিন্ন অধিকাংশ সুশিক্ষিত নর-নারী এই  
 প্রলয়কাৰ্য্যে যোগ দিয়াছিলেন। একদিকে যেমন সংস্কৃত কালেজে  
 কোন কোন অধ্যাপক প্রকাশ্যরূপে নাস্তিকতা প্রচার আরম্ভ করিয়া-  
 ছিলেন—সেইরূপ অতীতকালে ব্রাহ্মগণ হিন্দুধৰ্ম্মের বিরুদ্ধে ঘোরতর  
 আন্দোলন আরম্ভ করিয়াছিলেন। ব্রাহ্মধৰ্ম্মের প্রচারকগণ বেদিপীঠে  
 উপবিষ্ট হইয়া পৌত্তলিকতা, বর্ণাশ্রম, বালা-বিবাহ, অবরোধ-প্রথা  
 প্রভৃতির বিরুদ্ধে বক্তৃতা করিয়া অনন্তরূপী হিন্দুসমাজকে উদ্বলিত  
 করিয়া তুলিলেন। সেই বিরাট সমাজ চিরলালিত তন্ত্রা পরিত্যাগ  
 পূৰ্ব্বক হাই তুলিতে তুলিতে মদঙ্গ ও করতাল লইয়া হারিসংকীৰ্ত্তন  
 করিতে আরম্ভ করিলেন। চতুর্দিকে হারি-সভা স্থাপিত হইতে  
 লাগিল। ব্রাহ্মপ্রচারকগণের আদর্শে হিন্দু-প্রচারকগণ বেদিপীঠে  
 আসীন হইয়া ব্রাহ্মধৰ্ম্ম ও ব্রাহ্মগণের উপর গালিবর্ষণ আরম্ভ করিলেন।  
 ঘোরতর ধৰ্ম্মবিদ্বেষে উভয় সমাজ কলঙ্কিত হইতে লাগিল। উভয়  
 সমাজে বিদ্বেষভাব যেরূপ বদ্ধমূল হইয়াছিল—অতীত হইলে তাহার  
 পরিণাম আতশয় শোচনীয় হইত। বাগ্‌বদ্ধ ক্রমে ঘোরতর সংগ্রামে  
 পরিণত হইত। প্রোটেষ্ট্যান্ট-ধৰ্ম্মের প্রাচুর্য্যে প্রোটেষ্ট্যান্টগণের  
 সহিত ক্যাথলিকগণের যেরূপ সংগ্রাম বাধিয়াছিল—তীক্ষ্ণ ও  
 শাস্তিপ্ৰিয় হিন্দু ও ব্রাহ্মের সেরূপ কোন সংগ্রাম বাধে নাই। তাঁহাদের  
 ধৰ্ম্ম সংঘর্ষ কেবল বাগ্‌বুদ্ধেই পর্য্যবসিত হইয়াছিল।

সে সময় অনেক সুশিক্ষিত বৃদ্ধ পৌত্তলিকতা ও বর্ণাশ্রমের প্রতি  
 বিদ্বেষবশতঃ কিংবা সুশিক্ষিত স্ত্রী পাইবার আশায় স্বধৰ্ম্ম পরিত্যাগ  
 পূৰ্ব্বক খৃষ্টধৰ্ম্ম অবলম্বন করিতেন। কেশব-প্রচারিত নব ধৰ্ম্ম সে  
 অভাব পূরণ করায় আর কেহ খৃষ্টান হইতে যাইতেন না—পরন্তু  
 তাঁহাদিগের দ্বারা নব-প্রতিষ্ঠাপিত ব্রাহ্মসমাজ ক্রমশঃই পুষ্টাবয়ব  
 হইতে লাগিল। ইহাতে খৃষ্টান মিশনরীগণ কেশববাবু ও তদধিষ্ঠিত  
 ব্রাহ্মসমাজের উপর খড়াহস্ত হইয়া উঠিলেন। তাঁহারা বক্তৃতা ও  
 পুস্তিকাপ্রচার দ্বারা কেশব বাবু ও তাঁহার প্রচারিত ধৰ্ম্মকে সবিশেষ  
 আক্রমণ করিতে লাগিলেন। কেশব বাবু তাঁহার চিন্তাপ্রমাণিনী

বক্তৃতা দ্বারা ও সারগর্ভ প্রবন্ধ প্রচার করিয়া তাঁহাদিগের তর্কজাল খণ্ড খণ্ড করিতে লাগিলেন। তাঁহার অপ্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা প্রতিভাপ্রভাবে সুশিক্ষিত দল খৃষ্টধর্ম-প্রচারকগণের কবল হইতে রক্ষা পাইলেন। এই বীরোচিত কাহ্যের জন্য হিন্দু ও ব্রাহ্ম উভয় সমাজই তাঁহার নিকট সবিশেষ ঋণী আছেন। এ সময় কেশব বাবু কর্মক্ষেত্রে উপস্থিত না হইলে সুশিক্ষিত সম্প্রদায়ের অনেকে হয় ত এত দিনে খৃষ্টান হইয়া যাউতেন।

যখন পঞ্জাবে দলে দলে হিন্দুকে মুসলমান করা হইতেছিল—সেই সময় তথায় ধর্মদীর গুরু নানকের আবির্ভাব হয়। নানক নিরাকার ব্রহ্মের উপাসক ছিলেন। তাঁহার চরিত্রের নিম্নলিখিত জ্যোতিতে ও তৎপ্রচারিত ধর্মের পবিত্রতায় উজ্জ্বল ও পূত হইয়া পক্ষনদপ্রদেশস্থ হিন্দুগণ যাবনিক ধর্ম গ্রহণে বিরত হইলেন। এই মহাপুরুষের যথা-সাময়িক আবির্ভাবে পক্ষনদপ্রদেশ ধর্মমিল্লব হইতে রক্ষা পাইল। গীতাতে ভগবান ত্রীকক্ষ বলিয়াছিলেন যে, ‘যখনই যখনই সনাতন ধর্মের গ্রানি ও ধর্মপরায়ণ ব্যক্তিগণের উৎপীড়ন আরম্ভ হইবে—তখনই যুগে যুগে আমিই দ্রাবামে অবতীর্ণ হইয়া সনাতন ধর্মের রক্ষা ও ধার্মিকগণের উদ্ধারসাধন করিব।’ এই ভগবদ্‌বাক্য অব্যর্থ। নানক সেই ভগবদ্‌বাক্যের যথার্থ্য প্রতিপাদন করিবার জন্যই যেন দ্রাবামে অবতীর্ণ হইয়াছিলেন। গুরু নানকের শিষ্য দীর-সন্ন্যাসী গুরু-গোবিন্দ সিংহ ভারতের পবিত্রা মঙ্গলের জন্য হিন্দু যবন মিশাইয়া একটি অপূর্ণ রাক্ষসাত্মক জাতির সৃষ্টি করিয়া গিয়াছেন। এই মিলিত জাতি শিবসম্প্রদায় নামে খ্যাত হইয়াছে। গুরুগোবিন্দ-প্রতিষ্ঠাপিত এই জাতি এক সময় ভারতীয় সমস্ত হিন্দু ও যবনকে কুক্ষিগত করিতে উজ্জত হইয়াছিল। গুরুগোবিন্দ স্বয়ং ভগবতী ভবানীর নিকট নরমেধ-যজ্ঞ সমাপন করিয়া বর পাইয়াছিলেন যে, তাঁহার শিষ্যগণ প্রত্যেকে তাঁহার জন্য প্রাণোৎসর্গ করিবে—এবং তাহারা রণে অজয় হইবে। এই বর পাইয়া তিনি তত্ত্বোক্ত বিধি মতে হিন্দু যবন উভয়কেই মস্ত্রশিষ্য করিতে লাগিলেন। নবধর্মের নবীন

ভারতীয় উৎসাহে মাতিয়া ও ‘ভবানীর বরে তাহারা রণে অজ্ঞেয়’ এই বিশ্বাসে প্রোৎসাহিত হইয়া শিষ্যগণ সমস্ত পঞ্চনদ প্রদেশে গুরুর জয় উদ্‌ঘোষিত করিয়া বেড়াইতে লাগিল। সে প্রচণ্ড স্রোতস্বিনীর নিকট যবনসেনা ভূণের জ্বায় ভাসিয়া যাইতে লাগিল। দিল্লীর সিংহাসন টলমল করিতে লাগিল। এই সময় ঘাতক-হস্তে গুরু-গোবিন্দ সিংহের মৃত্যু না হইলে শিখসম্প্রদায় যে মহাশক্তিতে পরিণত হইত, কে বলিতে পারে ?

নানক ও গুরুগোবিন্দের জায় বুদ্ধ, শঙ্কর, চৈতন্য, রামমোহন ও কেশব—সকলেই ভারতের জাতায় একতা-সম্পাদনের চেষ্টায় জীবন উৎসর্গ করিয়া গিয়াছেন। জাতীয় একতা ব্যতীত ভারতের গৌরব রক্ষা হইবে না—ইহা তাহারা বিভিন্ন বিভিন্ন উপায়ে এই মহালক্ষ্য সাধন করিতে চেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন। বৌদ্ধধর্মের প্রাচুর্য্যবশত এই জাতীয় একতা পূর্ণতালাভ করিয়াছিল। তাহার ফলে অশোকের জয়ন্তস্তম্ভ সপ্তদ্বীপে নিখাত হইয়াছিল। পৃথিবীর সমস্ত রাজা তৎকালে অশোকের আদেশ শিরোধার্য্য করিতেন। কিন্তু সম্রাট অশোক ব্রাহ্মণ্য-ধর্ম একবারে তুলিয়া দিতে চেষ্টা করেন নাই। তিনি ব্রাহ্মণ-গণকে ও বৌদ্ধ শ্রমণগণকে সমদৃষ্টিতে দেখিবার জ্ঞান প্রজ্ঞারন্দের উপর আদেশ প্রচার করিয়াছিলেন। হিন্দু ও যবন মিলিত না হইলে ভারতের জাতীয় জীবনের কোনও আশা নাই, এই বিশ্বাস নানকের সময় হইতে ক্রমশঃ দৃঢ়ীভূত হইতেছে। কিরূপে এই অসাধ্যসাধন সম্পন্ন হইতে পারে—এই চিন্তা সমাজ-সংস্কারক ও ধর্ম প্রবর্তকমাত্রকেই আশ্রয় করিয়া আসিতেছে। বর্ণাশ্রমের সৃষ্টি হয়—তখন ভারতে যবনের আবির্ভাব হয় নাই। তখন এখানে শুদ্ধ জ্ঞেতা আর্য্যজাতি ও বিজিত শূদ্রজাতি অবস্থান করিতেছিলেন। ধর্মনিষ্ঠ আর্য্যেরা বিজিত অনার্য্য বা শূদ্রজাতিকে আপনাদিগের ধর্ম-সম্প্রদায়ের অন্তর্ভুক্ত করিয়া লইলেন। আর্য্যজাতি গুণকর্ম-বিভাগ বশতঃ ব্রাহ্মণ, ক্ষত্রিয় ও বৈশ্য—এই তিন বর্ণে বিভক্ত হইলেন। যাঁহারা সর্বগুণী ছিলেন ও নিরন্তর অধ্যাত্মবিজ্ঞানের অনুশীলন

করিতেন, তাঁহারা ব্রাহ্মণ বর্ণ হইলেন। বাহারা ব্রহ্মোত্তরী, তাঁহারা বৃদ্ধ-বিগ্রহ ও প্রজাপালনাদি কার্য্যে ব্যাপৃত থাকায় ক্ষত্রিয়বর্ণ হইলেন। ব্রাহ্মণ শব্দের অর্থ ব্রহ্মজ্ঞ—অর্থাৎ যিনি ব্রহ্মদর্শন পাইয়াছেন বা ব্রহ্মজ্ঞান লাভ করিয়াছেন—তিনি ব্রাহ্মণ। আর যিনি স্বদেশীয়গণকে শত্রুর অন্তর্জনিত ক্ষত হইতে রক্ষা করেন—তিনিই ক্ষত্র বা ক্ষত্রিয় ( ক্ষতাং ত্রায়তে যঃ সঃ ক্ষত্রঃ )। আর বাহারা ব্যবসায়-বাণিজ্য উপলক্ষে সর্বত্র গতিবিধি করিয়া থাকেন—তাঁহারা বৈশ্যবর্ণ হইলেন। সুতরাং ব্রাহ্মণ, ক্ষত্রিয় ও বৈশ্য—এই তিন বর্ণের যৌগিক অর্থ—(১) ব্রহ্মজ্ঞ, (২) ক্ষতত্রায়ক ও (৩) দেশ-ব্যাপক। বিজিত বা শূদ্রজাতি সাধারণতঃ তমোগুণী ও কষ্টসহিষ্ণু ছিল বলিয়া তাহাদিগকে কৃষিকার্য্যে নিয়োজিত করা হইল। এইরূপে হিন্দুজাতি চতুর্ধর্মে বিভক্ত হইল, কিন্তু সমাজের ক্রমোন্নতির সঙ্গে সঙ্গে গুণকর্ম্মের সংমিশ্রণ হইতে লাগিল। চতুর্ধর্ম্মের মধ্যে অনুলোম ও প্রাতি-লোম বিবাহ প্রচলিত থাকায় ক্রমে অসংখ্য সঙ্কর-বর্ণের উৎপত্তি হইতে লাগিল। এই সকল সঙ্করবর্ণ আপন আপন প্রবৃত্তি ও যোগ্যতা অনুসারে বিভিন্ন বিভিন্ন জীবিকা অবলম্বন করিতে লাগিল। ইহাতে বিজ্ঞান ও শিল্পের ভূয়সী চর্চ্চা আরম্ভ হইল।

ব্রাহ্মণ পিতা ও বৈশ্য মাতার অনুলোমমিলনে বৈদ্যজাতির উৎপত্তি হইল। বৈদ্যজাতি চিকিৎসাশাস্ত্রকে আপনাদিগের জাতীয় ব্যবসায়রূপে গ্রহণ করিল। এই বৈদ্যজাতি হইতে চিকিৎসাবিদ্যা পূর্ণতা লাভ করিয়াছিল। এই সঙ্করবর্ণ সাধারণতঃ নবশাখায় বিভক্ত হইলেন। এই সকল বর্ণের স্বরূপ ও কার্য্য নির্ণয় করা এ প্রবন্ধের লক্ষ্য ও প্রতিপাদ্য নহে। সুতরাং ইহার উৎপত্তির উল্লেখমাত্র করিয়া এখানে ক্ষান্ত হইব।

গুণকর্ম্মের বিভাগ অনুসারে প্রথমে বর্ণভেদ হয়। তাহাতে পুরাকালে অমৃতময় ফল উৎপন্ন হইয়াছিল। কিন্তু এক্ষণে এই বর্ণভেদ একরূপ জটিল হইয়া দাঁড়াইয়াছে যে, ইহা আপনাদিগের জাতীয় উন্নতির পরিপন্থী হইয়া পড়িয়াছে। যাহা একদিন অমৃতময় ফল প্রদব করিয়া

হিন্দু জাতিকে জগতের আরাধ্য করিয়া তুলিয়াছিল, সেই বর্ণভেদ এক্ষণে ভারতীয় উন্নতির পথে কণ্টকস্বরূপ বলিয়া বিবেচিত হইতেছে। যদিও প্রত্যেক বর্ণ আপন পিতৃ-পৈতামহিক কস্মে রত থাকিয়া তাহাতে অসাধারণ দক্ষতা লাভ করিতে চেষ্টা করিতেন, তাহা হইলে ভারতের এ দৃর্দশা ঘটিত না। কিন্তু বৈদেশিক সংমিশ্রণ আরম্ভ হওয়ার পর হইতেই—এই বর্ণভেদের মূল উদ্দেশ্য বিনষ্ট হইয়া গিয়াছে। বৈদেশিক রাজার অধীনে বর্ণগত কস্ম-পার্থক্য ক্রমশঃ বিলুপ্ত হইয়া যাইতেছে। মুসলমানদিগের রাজত্বকালে এই বর্ণগত কস্ম-পার্থক্য কিয়ৎপরিমাণে ছিল—সুতরাং তখন বর্ণভেদ তত ক্লেশ-কর হইয়া উঠে নাই। কিন্তু ইংরাজ-রাজত্বকালে বর্ণগত কস্ম-পার্থক্য প্রায় বিলুপ্ত হইতে চলিল। বৌদ্ধ-নিহিত গুণপার্থক্য একেবারে বিলুপ্ত হইবার নচে বলিয়াই এখনও ইহার অস্তিত্ব রহিয়াছে। কিন্তু এইরূপভাবে সমাজবন্ধন ক্রমশঃ শিথিল হইলে—আর দুই এক শতাব্দীর মধ্যে বর্ণভেদ নামমাত্রে পর্যাবসিত হইবে। এক্ষণে ব্রাহ্মণ ব্রাহ্মণের কার্য্য বজ্ঞন, যাজ্ঞন ও অধ্যাপনা—ক্ষত্রিয় তাঁহার কার্য্য যুদ্ধবিগ্রহাদি কার্য্যে নিরত থাকিয়া এবং তাঁহাদিগের দৃষ্টান্তের অনুবর্তনে ও রাজার উৎসাহে অগ্ৰাণ্য বর্ণও আপনাদিগের জাতীয় ব্যবসায়াদি পরিত্যাগ পূর্ব্বক রাজপ্রসাদভোগের অভিলাষে পরস্পর পরস্পরের প্রতিবন্দ্বিতা করিতেছেন। উচ্চ-নীচ ও লঘু-গুরু জ্ঞান ক্রমশঃই লোপ হইয়া যাইতেছে। এই বর্ণ-সংঘর্ষে উচ্চবর্ণের বিশেষ ক্লেশ উপস্থিত হইয়াছে, ব্রাহ্মণকে উচ্চ স্থান হইতে নামান যেন সকলেরই লক্ষ্য হইয়া দাঁড়াইয়াছে। অগ্ৰাণ্য বর্ণ রাজার সচিব এ বিষয়ে যোগ দিয়াছেন। ব্রাহ্মণকে না নামাইতে পারিলে বৈদেশিক রাজা হিন্দুদিগের উপর অপ্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা প্রভৃতা স্থাপন করিতে পারিতেছেন না। সর্ব্ববর্ণ আজও ব্রাহ্মণকে প্রণাম করেন; কিন্তু রাজপুরুষগণকে সেলাম করেন। ইহা তাঁহাদিগের অসহ। এই জ্ঞাত রাজপুরুষগণ ব্রাহ্মণ অপেক্ষা অল্প বর্ণের অধিকতর আদর আরম্ভ করিয়াছেন। কায়স্থ, বৈদ্য প্রভৃতিকে যে পরিমাণ উচ্চপদ দিতেছেন, ব্রাহ্মণকে সে পরিমাণে দিতেছেন না। কিন্তু ব্রাহ্মণরা

আজও সমাজপতি ও আধ্যাত্মিক নেতা রহিয়াছেন। এইজন্ম ইংরাজ রাজপুরুষগণের সহিত ব্রাহ্মণগণের ভিতরে ভিতরে মনোমালিন্য উপস্থিত হইয়াছে। এই ভাব মহারাষ্ট্রদেশে পরিস্ফুট হইয়াছে। অনান্য দেশে ইহা প্রাথমিক হইয়াছে মাত্র। ইংরাজরাজের সন্ন্যাসিগণের উপরও বিষদৃষ্টি পড়িয়াছে। পরস্পর সংঘর্ষ উৎপাদন করিয়া রাজত্ব করা ইংরাজ রাজনীতির একটি প্রধান অঙ্গ। তাহা ভারতে পূর্ণমাত্রায় প্রকটীকৃত হইয়াছে। আমরা অল্পবুদ্ধি; স্বতরাং আমরা এই কূট-নীতির মর্মগ্রহ করিতে না পারিয়া এক্ষণে বর্ণসংঘর্ষে প্রবৃত্ত হইয়াছি। কেশব বাবুর অভিপ্রায় মহান হইলেও—তাঁহার প্রচার-কার্যের ফল অমৃতময় হয় নাই। বৈদেশিক শাসনের সময় অন্তর্বিচ্ছেদ হওয়া কোন মতেই প্রার্থনীয় নহে। বর্ণাশ্রমের উপকারিতা একবারে নাই, এ কথা কেহ বলিতে পারেন না। এই বর্ণাশ্রম থাকায় কোন বিজেতৃত্বাতি আজ পর্যন্ত হিন্দুজাতিকে কুক্ষিগত করিতে পারেন নাই।

এই বর্ণাশ্রমের মহিমায় আমরা সাত শত বৎসরের দাসত্বেও আমাদের জাতিগত স্বাভাবিক রক্ষা করিয়াছি। মুসলমানেরা কত ভয়প্রদর্শন ও কত লোভ দেখাইয়াও হিন্দু জাতিকে কুক্ষিগত করিতে পারেন নাই। উচ্চবংশের দুই চারি জন ও নিম্নশ্রেণীর কতকগুলিকে স্বধর্মচ্যুত করিতে পারিয়াছিলেন মাত্র। হিন্দুর যে বর্ণাশ্রম হিন্দু-জাতিকে এই সাত শত বৎসরের দাসত্বের সময় পূর্ণধ্বংস হইতে রক্ষা করিয়াছে, সে বর্ণাশ্রমের কোন মহিমা নাই, এ কথা কে বলিতে পারেন? এত দিনের একটি প্রকাণ্ড এবং বজ্র অপেক্ষা কঠিন অট্টালিকাকে চূর্ণ-বিচূর্ণ করিতে চেষ্টা করা সমীচীন নহে। এই ঘোর বৈপ্লবিককালে আমাদের মস্তিষ্কে স্নিগ্ধ রাখা অতি কঠিন বটে, কিন্তু মস্তিষ্কের চঞ্চলতার সময় আমাদের প্রাচীন সমস্ত আচার-ব্যবহার, রীতি-নীতি আমূল পরিবর্তন করিতে চেষ্টা করা কোনমতেই উচিত নহে। ইহার ফল নিশ্চয় বিষময় হইবে।

কেশব বাবু হিন্দু শাস্ত্র ও বর্ণাশ্রমের বিরুদ্ধে অভ্যুত্থিত হওয়ার কিছুকাল পরে বিলাতযাত্রা করেন। তথায় তিনি যেরূপ সম্মান পাইয়াছিলেন—রাজা রামমোহন রায় ব্যতীত আর কোন বাদশাহী তাদৃশ সম্মান পান নাই। মহারাজা ভিক্টোরিয়া স্বয়ং তাঁহাকে বক্ষুভাবে গ্রহণ করিয়াছিলেন, তাঁহার প্রাসাদে অত্যাধিক কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের প্রতিমূর্ত্তি বিরাজ করিতেছে। তাঁহার খাতিরেই সম্রাজ্ঞী কেশবহুহিতা কুচাবহারের মহারাজাকে তাঁহার পাখের আসনে সমাসীন করিয়াছিলেন। কেশব বাবু যে শুদ্ধ রাজ-সম্মান পাইয়াছিলেন—এরূপ নহে; তিনি প্রায় সমস্ত সমান আদর পাইয়াছিলেন। বিশেষতঃ ইউনিটেরিয়ান খৃষ্টানেরা তাঁহাকে আপনাদের দলের অন্যতম নেতা বলিয়া গ্রহণ করিয়াছিলেন। তাঁহার অমাত্যবো বক্তৃতায় বিলাতের আবাল-বৃদ্ধ-বনিতা মুগ্ধ হইয়াছিলেন।

বিলাতে খৃষ্টধর্মের মহিমা স্বচক্ষে দেখিয়া কেশব বাবুর চিত্ত খৃষ্টধর্মের দিকে স্বতঃই আকৃষ্ট হইয়াছিল। এই বিলাতে অবস্থিতিকালেই তিনি ব্রাহ্মধর্মকে খৃষ্টীয় আদর্শে গঠিত করার সম্বন্ধ মনে মনে পোষণ করেন। তাই বিলাত হইতে ফিরিয়া আসিয়াই তিনি প্রচার করেন যে ব্রাহ্মধর্ম হিন্দুধর্ম নহে। ব্রাহ্মধর্ম ও ইউনিটেরিয়ান খৃষ্টিয়ান এক, এ কথা তিনি যুক্তকণ্ঠে স্বীকার করেন নাই বটে—কিন্তু তাঁহার যীশুখৃষ্ট (Jesus Christ) নামক বক্তৃতায় তিনি খৃষ্টকে প্রকারান্তরে গুরু বলিয়া স্বীকার করিয়াছেন। তিনি বিলাত হইতে ফিরিয়া ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসম্মিলনের বেদপীঠে বলিয়া যে সকল হৃদয়-গ্রাহিণী বক্তৃতা দিয়াছিলেন—আমরা সে সকল বক্তৃতা স্বকণ্ঠে শুনিয়াছিলাম। সে সকল বক্তৃতায় ঈশ্বরের স্বরূপ যেরূপে বর্ণিত হইয়াছিল—তাহাতে ঈশ্বরকে রূপ ও গুণের আধার করা হইয়াছিল। তিনি স্বর্গের রাজা, স্বর্গের সিংহাসনে বসিয়া মানুষের পাপ-পুণ্যের বিচার করিয়া—তাঁহার পাপের দণ্ডাবধান করিতে থাকেন বা গুণের পুরস্কার দিয়া থাকেন—এ সকল ভাব তাঁহার তাত্‌কালিক বক্তৃতায় পরিবাস্ত হইয়াছিল। উপনিষৎ ও বেদান্তপ্রচারিত অদ্বৈতবাদ

হুইতে কেশবপ্রচারিত দ্বৈতবাদ শূদ্রপ্রক্ষিপ্ত। নিরাকার ব্রহ্ম—  
নিষ্ক্রিয় নিগুণ নামরূপবিহীন—অব্যক্ত—অনন্ত, আর তাঁহার ঈশ্বর  
ক্রিয়াম্বিত—গুণযুক্ত—নামরূপবান—ব্যক্ত—ও সমীম।

পৌরাণিক ও তান্ত্রিক কালে হিন্দুধর্ম-প্রবর্তকগণ সাধকগণের  
হিতের নিমিত্ত ব্রহ্মের যে রূপকল্পনা\* করিয়াছিলেন, সেই  
স্বরূপ ব্রহ্মের উপাসনাকেই ব্রাহ্মেরা পৌত্তলিকতা বলিয়া নিন্দা  
করিয়া, নিষ্ক্রিয়, নিগুণ, নামরূপবিহীন পরমব্রহ্মের উপাসনা পুনঃ  
প্রবর্তিত করিতে চেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন। রামমোহন রায় কোন  
নবধর্মের প্রবর্তনা করেন নাই। তিনি হরিহর-বিধিবেদ্য ঋষিগণের  
ধ্যানগম্য জন্ম-মরণ-ভীতিভ্রংশী নিখিল ভুবনবীজ সংচিৎআনন্দস্বরূপ  
ব্রহ্মচৈতন্যের পূজাপদ্ধতির পুনরাবর্তন করিতে চেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন  
মাত্র; জনসাধারণ এই সূক্ষ্ম পূজার অনধিকারী বলিয়া ঋষিগণ  
তাহাদিগের জন্ত স্থল বাহ্যপূজার অবতারণা করিয়াছিলেন। যাহারা  
পৃথিবী কখনও ভ্রমণ করে নাই—এবং করিতে পারিবেও না—  
তাহাদিগের নিকট শিক্ষকগণ যেমন গোলক (Globe) বা মানচিত্র  
(map) ধারণ করিয়া তাহাদিগকে পৃথিবীর স্থল অবয়ব ও পৃথিবীস্থ  
দেশ, রাজ্য, নগর, নদ, নদী, গিরি, গুহা প্রভৃতি বুঝাইয়া দেন,  
সেইরূপ ঋষিগণ স্থল উপাসক-মণ্ডলীর সুবিধার জন্ত ব্রহ্মের রূপকল্পনা  
করিয়া তাঁহার সৃষ্টিস্থিতিপ্রলয়রূপ ক্রিয়াশক্তি প্রভৃতি বুঝাইয়া  
দিয়াছিলেন। ইহা পুত্তলী-পূজা (Idol-worship) নহে, অব্যক্ত  
ব্রহ্মের ব্যক্ত রূপের সাঙ্কেতিক (symbolic) পূজা মাত্র। ঋষিরা  
জানিতেন, ব্রহ্মের লিঙ্গ নাই—সুতরাং তাঁহারা ব্রহ্মশব্দকে ক্রীবলিঙ্গ  
করিয়াছেন। অথচ তাঁহারা তাঁহাকে কখন জগদদ্বন্দ্ব, কখন জগৎ-  
পিতা বলিয়া স্তব করিয়াছেন। মহানির্লিপ্য তত্ত্বে শিব মহাকালীকে  
স্তব করিতে গিয়া তাঁহাকে জায়া ও জননী, দুই-ই বলিয়াছেন।  
নিত্য-যুক্ত সাধক তাঁহাকে কখন কি বলিয়া না ডাকিয়া থাকেন।  
মহম্মদও ঈশ্বরকে ‘আল্লা’ বলিয়া ডাকিয়া ছিলেন। ‘আল্লা’ সংস্কৃত

\* সাধনাকাং হিতার্থায় ব্রহ্মণো রূপকল্পনা।



শব্দ—ইহার প্রয়োগ বেদে দেখিতে পাওয়া যায়। ‘আত্মা’ শব্দের অর্থ ‘অত্মা’—জগদত্মা ইহার যোগরূটি অর্থ। তদ্ব্যুৎপত্তি মাতৃভাবে সাধনা প্রথম প্রবর্তিত করেন। বেদেও মাতৃভাবে সাধনা অলঙ্কৃতভাবে প্রচারিত হইয়াছে। কারণ, সূর্য্য হইতে জগতের উৎপত্তি হইয়াছে বলিয়া সূর্য্যকে ‘প্রসবিতা’—‘সবিতা’—‘প্রসবিত্রী’ শব্দে স্তব করা হইয়াছে। কিন্তু তদ্ব্যুৎপত্তি স্পষ্টাক্ষরে সূর্য্যকে স্ত্রী ও চন্দ্রকে পুরুষ বলিয়া নির্দেশ করিয়াছেন। ইহা তদ্ব্যুৎপত্তির স্তম্ভ সাধনের অভ্যন্তরে বিশদরূপে বর্ণিত আছে।

পরমব্রহ্মের উপাসনা লোকসাধারণের মধ্যে প্রবর্তিত করিবার জন্তই রাজা রামমোহন রায় ব্রাহ্ম-ধর্ম্মের প্রচার করেন। এই পরমব্রহ্মকে নিগুণ ব্রহ্ম কহে—আর দেবদেবীগণকে সগুণ ব্রহ্ম কহে। যাহারা নিগুণ ব্রহ্মের ধ্যান-ধারণায় অধিকারী রামমোহন রায় তাঁহাদিগকে লইয়া ব্রহ্মোপাসনা করিতে আরম্ভ করেন। এই আদি ব্রাহ্মগণ উপাসক সম্প্রদায়মাত্র ছিলেন। কিন্তু কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের ব্রাহ্মসমাজ একটি সামাজিক দলে পরিণত হইল। যাহারা নির্দিষ্ট নিয়মের অধীন হইয়া এই সম্প্রদায়ে প্রবেশ করিতে ইচ্ছা করিতেন, তাঁহাদিগকেই এই সম্প্রদায়ভুক্ত করিয়া লওয়া হইত। যে যে কারণে অশিক্ষিত হিন্দুগণ পূর্বে গৃহীন হইতেন, সেই সেই কারণেই তাঁহারা ব্রাহ্মসমাজে প্রবিষ্ট হইতে লাগিলেন। ইহা মুক্তকণ্ঠে বলিতে হইবে, কেশব বাবু এই স্রোতের গতি ফিরাইয়া ব্রাহ্ম ও হিন্দু—উভয়েরই কৃতজ্ঞতাভাজন হইয়াছেন। কারণ, কেশব বাবু ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্মকে খৃষ্টধর্ম্মের আদর্শে গঠিত করিতে চেষ্টা করিলেও—ইহা বৈষ্ণবধর্ম্মের জায় হিন্দুধর্ম্ম তরুর একটি শাখা মাত্র। সুতরাং ব্রাহ্মগণ আপনাদিগকে হিন্দু না বলিলেও হিন্দুসমাজ ইহাদিগকে অন্তরঙ্গ বলিয়া মনে করিয়া থাকেন। আপনার বস্তু কখন পর হয় না, আর পর কখন আপনার হয় না। খ্রীষ্টিয় ধর্ম্ম বৈদেশিক ধর্ম্ম—ইহার অবলম্বনে দেশীয় খ্রীষ্টিয়ানগণ আচার-ব্যবহার, রীতিনীতি ও ক্রিয়াকলাপে হিন্দুসমাজ হইতে শুদূরবিক্ষিপ্ত হইয়া পড়িয়াছেন।

স্বতরাং ইঁহারা হিন্দুদিগের সহিত কখনই মিশিতে পারিবেন না ; কিন্তু ব্রাহ্মগণ সহজেই পারিবেন—যেহেতু ইঁহাদিগের আচার-ব্যবহার, রীতিনীতি ও ক্রিয়াকলাপ এখনও হিন্দুসমাজের অনুগামী আছে। পাশ্চাত্য শিক্ষাপ্রাপ্ত হিন্দু-পরিবারের সহিত ব্রাহ্ম-পরিবারের সহিত ব্রাহ্ম-পরিবারের আভাস্তরায় অবস্থাগত পূর্ণ পার্থক্য এখনও অম্লভূত হয় না। স্বতরাং অগ্রগত হিন্দু-পরিবারের সহিত ব্রাহ্মসমাজের ক্রমশঃ মিল হইয়া যাটবার সম্ভাবনা আছে। এখনই স্পষ্ট দেখা যায়, উভয়ে উভকে আকর্ষণ করিয়াছেন। এক ভাই ব্রাহ্ম ও এক ভাই হিন্দু—একত্র অবস্থিতি করিতেছেন—অথচ হিন্দুসমাজ হিন্দুভ্রাতাকে জ্ঞাতীচ্যুত করিতেছে না। যেখানে পিতা ব্রাহ্ম—পুত্র হিন্দু—সে স্থলেও হিন্দুসমাজের এইরূপ উদারতা উপলব্ধিত হইতেছে। কেবল বিবাহাদি কার্যের সময় ব্রাহ্ম পিতা পুত্র ভ্রাতাকে—হিন্দু-পুত্র—পিতা—বা ভ্রাতার গৃহ পরিত্যাগ করিতে হয় মাত্র। এ সামান্য শাসন কালে অন্তর্হিত হইবে—তখন ব্রাহ্মগণ বৈষ্ণবগণের জায় হিন্দুসমাজ মধ্যে পরিগৃহীত হইবেন। কেশব বাবু সেই বৈপ্লবিক কালে দীর্ঘের জায় খ্রীষ্টিয় ধর্মস্রোতের সম্মুখে দণ্ডায়মান না হইলে আজ হিন্দুসমাজের বিশেষ দুর্গতি হইত, সন্দেহ নাই।

শিখ-সম্প্রদায়ের আদিগুরু নানক যেমন নিরাকার ব্রহ্মের উপাসনা প্রবর্তিত করিয়া পঞ্চদশপ্রদেশে যাবনিক ধর্মের গতিরোধ করিয়াছিলেন, রাজা রামমোহন রায় সেইরূপ বেদ, উপনিষদ ও তন্ত্রোক্ত নিরাকার ব্রহ্মের উপাসনা প্রবর্তিত করিয়া বঙ্গ খ্রীষ্টিয় ধর্মের গতিরোধ করিয়াছিলেন। গুরুগোবিন্দ সিংহ যেমন হিন্দু ও যবন মিশাইয়া তাঁহার সম্প্রদায়কে একটি মহাশক্তিতে পরিণত করিয়াছিলেন—কেশব বাবুও সেইরূপ সর্বজাতি মিশাইয়া বঙ্গের ব্রাহ্মসমাজকে সেইরূপ একটি মহাশক্তিতে পরিণত করিতে চেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন। যদি কুচবিহারের বিবাহ-বিভ্রাটে ব্রাহ্মসমাজের সহিত তাঁহার সংঘর্ষ উপস্থিত না হইত, তাহা হইলে তাঁহার অভীষ্ট সিদ্ধ হইবার বিশেষ সম্ভাবনা ছিল। কিন্তু ভগদত্তার ইচ্ছা অতরূপ হওয়ায় তাঁহার

মনোবাঞ্ছা পূর্ণ হইল না। তাঁহার মনোরথ অঙ্কুরে বিদলিত হইয়া গেল। ব্রাহ্মসমাজকে মহাশক্তিতে পরিণত করিবার জ্ঞাত্তি তিনি জীবন উৎসর্গ করিয়াছিলেন—ঘটনাস্রোতে পড়িয়া তিনিই সেই সমাজকে ছিন্ন-ভিন্ন করিয়া ফেলিলেন। তিনিই আদিসমাজ হইতে বিচ্ছিন্ন হইয়া ব্রাহ্মসমাজকে দ্বিধা-বিভক্ত করেন। আবার তিনিই স্ব-প্রতিষ্ঠাপিত ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজকে দ্বিধা-বিভক্ত হইতে দিলেন। ইহাতে তাঁহার দোষ অধিক কি বিদ্রোহি-দলের দোষ অধিক—ইহার বিচার করা এ প্রবন্ধের লক্ষ্য নহে। তবে ইহা না বলিলে সত্যের অপলাপ করা হইবে যে, তিনি ব্রাহ্মসমাজের সম্রাট হইয়া রামের ত্রায় প্রজারঞ্জন-ধর্ম রক্ষা করিতে পারেন নাই। রামচন্দ্র সীতাকে পরম সতী জানিয়াও প্রজারঞ্জনানুরোধে পূর্ণ-গর্ভাবস্থায় নিক্ষেপিত করিয়াছিলেন। কোন দেশের কোন রাজা প্রজারঞ্জনের এক্রূপ দৃষ্টান্ত দেখাইতে পারেন নাই। সেই দেশে জন্মগ্রহণ করিয়া, কেশব বাবুর ত্রায় মহামতি ধর্ম্মাচার্য্য কত্তার বিবাহে শিষ্যানুরঞ্জনার্থ আত্মত্যাগ দেখাইতে পারিলেন না—ইহা মহা ক্ষোভের বিষয় সন্দেহ নাই। তিনি ব্রাহ্মগণের বিবাহের জ্ঞাত্তি যে তিনি আইন (Act III of 1872) জারী করাইলেন—নিজের কত্তার বিবাহে তাহার অনাথা করিলেন বলিয়া তাঁহার শিষ্যগণ তাঁহাকে বেদিচ্যুত করিলেন। তিনি তাঁহা-দিগকে ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজ-মন্দির হইতে বিদূরিত করিলে—তাঁহার 'সাধারণ ব্রাহ্মসমাজ' আখ্যা দারণ করিলেন। তিনি ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের আচার্য্য রহিলেন। অবশেষে তিনি সমাজের নাম 'নববিধান' প্রদান করিয়া ইহার আচার্য্যপদে ব্রতী হইলে—ভাই প্রতাপচন্দ্র মজুমদার ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজের সম্পাদকপদে প্রতিষ্ঠাপিত হইলেন। এইরূপে অর্দ্ধশতাব্দীর মধ্যে ব্রাহ্মসমাজ স্রোতস্বিনী হিন্দুসমাজ-মন্ডাকিনী হইতে উৎপন্ন হইয়া গঙ্গা, যমুনা, সরস্বতী ও গোদাবরী—এই চতুঃস্রোতে বিভক্ত হইয়া পড়িল। আদিসমাজ পুততোয়া গঙ্গা—মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথের সাধনক্ষেত্র। ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্মসমাজ কালিন্দী যমুনা নববৃন্দাবনকে পবিত্র করিয়া গঙ্গার সহিত মিলিত হইয়াছেন। সাধারণ ব্রাহ্মসমাজ অন্তঃসলিলা সরস্বতী।

ইহার বাহ্য আড়ম্বর নাই বটে, কিন্তু ইহা ধীরে ধীরে একটি রাজ-  
নৈতিক ধর্মসমাজের আকার ধারণ করিতেছে। ‘সরস্বতীর বরপুত্র-  
গণ প্রধানতঃ ইহার পৃষ্ঠপোষক। ‘নববিধান’ পুণ্যসলিলা গোদাবরী  
—ইহার বিস্তৃতি বিশাল ও লক্ষ্য মহৎ। কিন্তু ইহার স্থিতিকাল  
সম্বন্ধে বিশেষ সন্দেহ আছে।

নববিধান—স্বতন্ত্র ধর্ম নহে—সর্বধর্ম-সমন্বয় মাত্র। যে দিনে  
পৃথিবীতে সর্বধর্মের সমন্বয় হইবে, সেই দিনেই পৃথিবীর সুখসমষ্টি  
চরমসীমায় উপনীত হইবে। যুদ্ধ-বিগ্রহ—বিবাদ-বিসংবাদ—তখন  
থাকিবে না বলিলেও অতুক্তি হয় না। ইহাকে বাইবেলে মিলে-  
নিয়ম ( Millennium ) বলিয়াছে। খ্রীষ্টানেরা বিশ্বাস করেন যে,  
যীশু পুনর্বার অবতীর্ণ হইয়া পৃথিবীর রাজা হইবেন—এবং সমস্ত  
পৃথিবীতে খ্রীষ্টধর্ম প্রতিষ্ঠাপিত করিবেন। আর্যেরা সনাতন ধর্ম  
প্রচার করিয়াও কখন ভাবেন নাই যে, তাঁহাদিগের সনাতন ধর্ম  
সমস্ত পৃথিবীতে প্রচারিত হইবে। এই জগৎ এই স্বধর্ম ও পরধর্মের  
উল্লেখ গীতাতে দেখিতে পাওয়া যায়—‘স্বধর্মো নিধনং শ্রেয়ঃ পরধর্মো  
ভয়াবহঃ’—ভগবান্ শ্রীকৃষ্ণ উপদেশ দিয়াছিলেন যে, স্বধর্মে থাকিয়া  
বরং জীবন উৎসর্গ করিবে, সেও ভাল—তথাপি পরধর্ম গ্রহণ করিবে  
না—কারণ, পর-ধর্ম ভয়াবহ। কিন্তু কেশব বাবু সর্বধর্মের সমন্বয়  
করিয়া শান্তি ও ভগবান্ শ্রীকৃষ্ণকেও উদারতায় পরাস্ত করিয়াছেন।  
কারণ, তাঁহার নিকট পর-ধর্ম নাই—সকলই স্বধর্ম। তৎপ্রচারিত  
‘নববিধান’ সর্বধর্মকে কুক্ষিগত করিয়া বিশ্বরূপ ধর্মের সৃষ্টি করিয়াছে।  
এই ভাব এত মহান্ ও অস্বপ্ন যে, ইহাকে ধারণা করা সাধারণ লোকের  
কার্য্য নহে। যে কক্ষা সমস্ত ব্রহ্মাণ্ডকে ধারণ করে—তাঁহার পরি-  
মাপ করে, কাঁহার সাধ্য ? কত কত ছায়াপথ, গ্রহনক্ষত্রাদি, কত  
কত ধূমকেতু আপন আপন কক্ষায় ইহার অভ্যন্তরে যে ভ্রাম্যমাণ  
হইতেছে—তাহা চিন্তারও অগম্য। ব্রহ্মবিন্দুর তত্ত্ব যাঁহারা জানিতে  
পারিয়াছেন—তাঁহারা সমাধিযোগে এই মহাকক্ষার কিছু সন্ধান  
পাইলেও পাইতে পারেন। কিন্তু বিজ্ঞান ইহাকে কোন কালেই

আয়ত্ত করিতে পারিবে না। অযোগী ব্যক্তিও কখন ইহার সন্ধান পাইবে না। সেইরূপ একটি ধর্মের গূঢ়-তত্ত্ব অনুসন্ধান করিতে যখন একটি জীবনে কুলায় না, তখন সর্বধর্মতত্ত্বকে আয়ত্ত করিয়া তাহার মীমাংসা করা যে যে-সে ব্যক্তিবিশেষের সাধ্যাত্ত, তাহা আমাদের ধারণা হয় না। তবে কেশব বাবুর ভাষা যোগাক্রুত ও অসাধারণ প্রতিভাশালী ব্যক্তির পক্ষে ইহা অসাধ্য, এ কথা আমরা বলিতে পারি না। তাঁহার সাধ্য হইলেও তাঁহার সম্প্রদায়স্থ সমস্ত ব্যক্তির ইহা সাধ্যাত্ত, এ কথা আমরা স্বীকার করিতে পারি না। যদি তাহা না হয়—তাহা হইলে একরূপ বিশ্বরূপ ধর্মপ্রচার দ্বারা জগতের বিশেষ কি শুভ সম্পাদিত হইবে, তাহা আমরা বুঝিতে পারি না। তবে কেশব বাবুর কল্পনায় একরূপ একটি প্রকাণ্ড ব্যাপার আসিয়াছিল বলিয়া তাঁহার প্রতি আমাদের ভক্তি গাঢ়তম হইয়াছে মাত্র। তিনি যে জীবনযুক্ত, ইহা তাঁহার বিশেষ পরিচায়ক। তিনি শিষ্যগণ কর্তৃক পরিত্যক্ত হইয়া নিঃসঙ্গ যোগতাপস না হইলে তাঁহার কল্পনায় একরূপ সূক্ষ্ম অথচ মহান বিশ্বরূপ ধর্মের আবির্ভাব হইতে পারিত না। ব্রহ্ম বিশ্বব্যাপী, স্মরণ্য অগোচর। সত্য বিশ্বব্যাপী, তাহা ইন্দ্রিয়গোচর হইতে পারে না। কারণ, তাহা মহান হইতেও সূক্ষ্মতম। সেইরূপ যে ধর্ম বিশ্বরূপ, তাহার স্বতন্ত্র স্বরূপ কেহ দেখিতে পাইবে না। স্মরণ্য সে ধর্ম সাধন-ভজন ও ক্রিয়াকলাপের উপযোগী হইতে পারে না।

কেশব বাবু স্বরূপতঃ তাত্ত্বিক যোগী ছিলেন। কারণ, তিনি ভোগ ও ধোগ উভয়কেই আলিঙ্গন করিয়াছিলেন। জনকাদির ভাষা তিনি সন্তোগের মধ্যে থাকিয়াও পরম যোগী ও ব্রহ্মজ্ঞ ছিলেন। বৈদিক সন্ন্যাসে কামিনী-কাঞ্চন বর্জিত হইয়াছে, কিন্তু তাত্ত্বিক সন্ন্যাসে কামিনী-কাঞ্চন সাধনার উপকরণ-সামগ্রী বলিয়া গৃহীত হইয়াছে। “বিকারের কারণ থাকিতে যাতাদিগের চিত্ত বিকৃত না হয়, তাঁহারাষ্ট প্রকৃত বীর।”\* এই উপদেশের মর্ম গ্রহণ করিলে

\* বিকারহেতু সতি বিক্রিয়ন্তে যেমাং ন চেতাংসি ত এন ধীরাঃ।—কুমারসম্ভবম্।

উপলব্ধি হইবে যে, বর্জনে পূর্ণ পরীক্ষা দেওয়া হইতে পারে না।  
বাঁহারা ভোগ করিয়াও ভোগে আসক্ত হন না—তাঁহারা ই সিদ্ধপুরুষ।  
কালিদাস রঘুবংশে লিখিয়াছেন যে, রঘুবংশীয় রাজারা ‘অসক্তঃ  
সুখমত্ত্বং,—অনাসক্ত হইয়া সুখভোগ করিতেন। ইহা মহাভোগের  
অবস্থা। কিন্তু সে ভোগ বৈধ হওয়া চাই। কেশব বাবু ভোগী  
হইলেও—অবৈধ ভোগশীল ছিলেন, এ কথা কেচ কখনও বলে নাই—  
বলিতেও পারে না। কেশব বাবুর ন্যায় জটিল চরিত্র কেবল  
যোগিজনেরাই ধারণা করিতে পারেন। অযোগী জনে কখন তাঁহাকে  
চিনিতে পারে নাই—পারিবেও না। এই মহাপুরুষকে আমি বার  
বার নমস্কার করি।

সাংসারিক ভোগী যে দ্রব্য একবার ভোগ করেন, তাহার আশ্বাদ  
ভুলিতে না পারায় সেই দ্রব্য পুনঃ পুনঃ ভোগ করিবার ইচ্ছা করিয়া  
থাকেন। ইহাতে অনন্ত বাসনার সৃষ্টি হয়। জন্ম বাসনামলক। এ  
জন্মে যদি সমস্ত বাসনা পূর্ণ না হয়, তাহা হইলে অতৃপ্ত বাসনা পরি-  
তৃপ্ত করিবার জন্য তাহার পুনরাবৃত্তি বা পুনঃ পুনঃ জন্ম হইবে। কিন্তু  
যিনি আশ্বাদিত বিষয়ে অনাসক্ত ও আশ্বাদিত বিষয়ে বাসনাহীন,  
এরূপ ব্যক্তি সংসারে অতি দুর্লভ।\* প্রথম শ্রেণীর লোককে বৃত্তক্ষ  
কহে এবং দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণীর লোককে মুমুক্ত কহে। সংসারমধ্যে বৃত্তক্ষ  
জায় মুমুক্ত ব্যক্তির সংখ্যাও অল্প নহে। কিন্তু বাঁহারা ভোগ-মোক্ষ-  
বাসনা-শূন্য, এরূপ মহাত্ম্যব ব্যক্তির সংখ্যা সংসারে আরও বিরল।†  
এরূপ ব্যক্তির বক্রমোক্ষ থাকিতে পারে না। কিন্তু এই শেষ অবস্থায়  
আসিবার ক্রম আছে। ভোগ ব্যতীত ভোগের বাসনার লয়  
হয় না। এই বিষয় লইয়া বেদে ও তন্ত্রে মতভেদ আছে।

\* বস্তুভোগেষু ভুক্তেন ন ভবত্যাধিবাসিতঃ।

অভুক্তেষু নিরাকাজ্ঞী তাদৃশো ভবদুর্লভঃ ॥

† বৃত্তক্ষরিব সংসারে-মুমুক্তরপি দুষ্কতে।

ভোগমোক্ষনিরাকাজ্ঞী বিরলো হি মহাশয়ঃ ॥

—অষ্টাবক্র-সংহিতা। সপ্তদশ প্রকরণম। ৪।৫

বেদ বলেন, ‘ন তেন কামঃ কামানামুপভোগেন শাম্যতি। হবিষা কৃষ্ণবজ্রৈব ভূয় এযাভিসর্গতে।’ কাম্য বস্তুর উপভোগের দ্বারা কামনা নিবৃত্ত হয় না। ঘৃতাহতি দিলে অগ্নি যেমন অধিকতর প্রজ্বলিত হয়, সেইরূপ জ্ঞানাস্কুণ দ্বারা কামনা দমন না করিয়া কাম্য বস্তুর ভোগ করিলে, কামনা দিন দিন বাড়িতে থাকে। তজ্জের মত “কণ্টকেনৈব কণ্টকম্।” কণ্টক দ্বারাই কণ্টক উদ্ভোলিত করিতে হইবে, ‘বিসম্ম বসমোষধম্’—বিষের ঔষধ বিষই। হোমিও-প্যাথিক চিকিৎসকের সঙ্গে তাত্ত্বিক সাধনার অনেক সাদৃশ্য আছে। কিন্তু এলোপ্যাথিক ও কবিরাজ ইহার সম্পূর্ণ বিপরীত। কোন চিকিৎসা-প্রণালী বা কোন সাধন প্রণালী শ্রেষ্ঠ, তাহার সমালোচনা করা এ প্রবন্ধের উদ্দেশ্য নহে। তবে এইমাত্র বক্তব্য যে, কেশব বাবু প্রকৃতঃ তাত্ত্বিক সাধক ছিলেন। তিনি প্রথম বুভুক্ষু, পরে বুভুক্ষু ও মুমুক্শু, তৎপরে মুমুক্শু—এবং সর্বশেষে ভোগমোক্ষ-নিরাকাজ্ঞা হইয়া-ছিলেন। এই শেষ অবস্থায় শ্রীশ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ পরমহংস দেবের স্ফীত তাঁহার প্রথম সাক্ষাৎ হয়। পরমহংস দেব তাঁহাকে বাগানে দেখিয়া প্রথম বলিয়াছিলেন যে, ‘এরই লাজ খসেছে।’ এই কথা শুনিয়া সভা-শুদ্ধ লোক হাসিয়া উঠিয়াছিলেন—কিন্তু কেশব বাবু তাঁহা-দিগকে স্থির হইতে বলিয়া পরমহংস দেবকে ইহার অর্থ জিজ্ঞাসা করায়, তিনি তদন্তরে বলিয়াছিলেন—‘যতদিন বেড়াচির লাজ না খসে, ততদিন সে কেবল জলে থাকে, পাড়ে উঠে ডেঙ্গায় বেড়াইতে পারে না। কিন্তু যেই তার লাজ খসে, অমনি সে লাফ দিয়া ডাঙ্গায় পড়ে। তখন সে জলেও থাকে, আবার ডাঙ্গাতেও থাকে। তেমনই মানুষ যত দিন অবিচার লাজ না খসে, ততদিন সংসার-জলে পড়ে থাকে! অবিচার লাজ খসলে, জ্ঞান হ’লে, তবে মুক্ত হয়ে বেড়াতে পারে। আবার ইচ্ছা হ’লে সংসারেও থাকতে পারে।’ ইহাই প্রকৃত জীবমুক্ত অবস্থা। গগবান্ রামকৃষ্ণ অতি সুন্দর দৃষ্টান্ত দ্বারা ইহাকে বিশদীকৃত করিয়াছেন। বেড়াচির লেজ যেমন তাহার তাঁরে উঠিবার অন্তরায়, সেইরূপ মানুষের বাসনা তাহার উর্দ্ধগতির বোধক। লাজ খসিলে বেড়াটি যেমন ইচ্ছামত জলেও থাকিতে

পারে, স্থলেও উঠিতে পারে—সেইরূপ বাসনা নিবৃত্ত হইলে মানুষও ইচ্ছামত সংসারে থাকিয়াও সংসারাতীত হইতে পারেন। পদ্মপত্র-স্থিত জলের ন্যায় তখন তাঁহারা সংসারে লিপ্ত নন।

এরূপ মহাপুরুষের সংখ্যা জগতে অতি বিরল। এ অবস্থায় ধর্ম, অর্থ, কাম, মোক্ষ—জীবন, মরণ—কিছুরই উপর হেয়োপাদেয়তা জ্ঞান থাকে না। সংসার বিনষ্ট হউক, ইহাও তাঁহার ইচ্ছা নহে, আবার সংসারের স্থিতিবিষয়েও তিনি উদাসীন। জীবিকানির্ব্বাহার্থ যৎকিঞ্চিৎ যাহা প্রাপ্ত হন, তিনি তাহাতেই সুখে কালযাপন করিয়া থাকেন।\* এই প্রকার ব্যক্তিই ধ্রু। মহাত্মা কেশবচন্দ্র সেন এই দশায় উপনীত হইয়াছিলেন বলিয়াই তিনি ধ্রু ও জগন্নাথ। তাঁহাকে আমরা বার বার নমস্কার করি। তিনি অন্তরাগিণী স্ত্রী ও মৃত্যুকে সমচক্ষুতে দেখিতেন বলিয়া † তাঁহাকে আমরা মুক্তপুরুষজ্ঞানে বার বার নমস্কার করিতেছি। হে দেব ! তুমি আমার পূজা গ্রহণ কর। ওঁ শান্তি।

\* ধর্ম্মার্থকামমোক্ষেষু জীবিতে মরণে তথা।

কন্তাপুদারচেতস্ত হেয়োপাদেয়তা ন চি ॥

বাজ্ঞা ন বিশ্ববিলয়ে ন ব্বেষস্তস্ত ন স্থিতৌ।

যথা জীবিকয়া তস্মাদ্ভ্যু আস্তে যথাস্থগম্ ॥

† সান্তরাগাং স্ত্রিয়ং দৃষ্টা মৃত্যুং বা সমুপস্থিতম।

অপিছলগনাঃ স্বস্তো মুক্ত এব মহাশয়ঃ ॥

—অষ্টাবক্রসংহিতা—সপ্তদশপ্রকরণম্। ৬-৭/১৪।



## কেশবচন্দ্রকে অধ্যয়ন করার কারণ

( ১৪৮২—স্বর্গগত ভাই প্রমথলালের ডায়েরী হইতে )

আমাদের দেশের লোকের আধুনিক বাংলা সাহিত্যে বঙ্কিম চন্দ্রকে বহুদিন উচ্চ স্থান দিয়া প্রশংসা করিয়াছে। তার মদো রবীন্দ্রনাথের বিশ্বব্যাপী নাম পৃথিবীর বহুদূর পর্য্যন্ত ছড়াইয়াছে। কিন্তু যাহার লেখায় নূতন ভারতের আত্মায় নূতন বিবেক (বা প্রেরণা) সৃষ্টি করিবে এবং যাহার প্রতিভা ও চরিত্রের প্রভাব পৃথক হইতেই অন্তরে অন্তরে নীরবে নূতন ভারতের সৃষ্টি করিয়াছে এবং যাহা নূতন ভারতের প্রত্যেক নরনারী এবং বালকের হৃদয়ে মানবজাতির নূতন আদর্শ স্থায়ী লাভ করাইয়া নূতন দেশসেবী, কবি, ধর্মি ও দেশের নূতন জন্মদাতা সৃষ্টি করিবে, সে সব লেখা কতকগুলি নীরব কন্ঠী অথবা এখানে সেখানে ছোট ছোট পিপাসুর দল ছাড়া অজ্ঞাত রহিয়াছে। সময় আসিয়াছে, যখন পুরাতন কালের বাইবেল ও বেদের এক সঙ্গে নূতনবেদ (জীবনবেদ), জীবনের নূতন বাইবেল পাঠ করা উচিত এবং যে স্বর্গীয় অফুরন্ত প্রেরণার উৎস তাঁহার, তাঁহার দেশের এবং তাঁহার জগতের জন্ত খুলিয়া গিয়াছিল, সেই উৎসে একবার যাহারা পড়িবেন, সেই সব লোকেরাও প্রাণভরে পান করিয়া তৃপ্ত হইবেন, এবং তাঁহার (কেশবের) মত সেই ভাবের প্রেরণায় চিন্তা, বাক্য, কার্য চলিবে। স্বর্গের পুরাতন, বহু পুরাতন সংবাদ এবং সংবাদদাতাদের, ঋষি, বৃদ্ধ, স্ক্রেটিশ, মুসা, মহম্মদ, চৈতন্য, নানক, রামমোহন, দেবেন্দ্রনাথ এবং বর্তমান যুগের বৈজ্ঞানিকগণ—তাঁহার মধ্যে নূতন ভাবের জন্ম বা প্রাণ-প্রতিষ্ঠা দেখিতে পাইবে। একবার ভগবান্কে সত্য, নিত্য সত্য, অদ্বিতীয় পুরুষ ভাবে দেখিলে, তাঁহাকে সজ্জিভাবে দেখিলে দেখিতে পাইবে,—ভারতকে, জগৎকে তিনি আহ্বান করিতেছেন এবং একবার এই সত্য, নিত্য সত্যে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইতে পারিলে দেখিবে, কেশবই একমাত্র ঐ আহ্বানে সাড়া

দিয়াছেন, এবং তাঁহার মত বর্তমান সময়ে আর কেহই দিতে পারেন নাই। সত্য নিত্য; সত্যো প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইয়া ঐ ব্যক্তিই চিন্তা, বাক্য ও কার্য্য সমভাবের প্রেরণায় চালাইতে পারিতেন, এবং তাঁহার লিপিবদ্ধ বাণীর ভিতর দিয়া এখনও তাহা করিতেছেন। সে সব বন্ধিমচন্দ্র বা রবীন্দ্রনাথের লেখার মত নয়, কিন্তু তাহা অনর্গল বা অচিন্ত্য বাণী বা উক্তি, তাহা অস্ত্রের দ্বারা গৃহীত এবং লিপিবদ্ধীকৃত। তিনি সর্বদাই সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ শিক্ষক ও গুরু ভগবানের চরণে নিত্য ছাত্র বা শিষ্য ছিলেন। এই পৃথিবী হতেও শিষ্য হিসাবে অন্তর্ধান হন, তাঁহার নিকটে প্রেরণার উৎস কখনও শুষ্ক হয় নাই; নিত্য শিষ্যের কাছে, নিত্য প্রেরণা হইত। একবার যে কেহ ঐ উৎসে বসিলে, কেশবচন্দ্রের অকৃত্রিম বাংলা ভাস্যরূপ উৎসের জল পান করিতে পারিবেন এবং তাঁহারাও প্রেরণার ঐরূপ স্বর্গীয় ধারায় স্নান করিতেছেন, বুঝিতে পারিবেন। তখন সাহিত্যে পবিত্রতা অপবিত্রতার ভিন্নতা পরিষ্কার হইয়া আসিবে; একবার স্বপ্রকাশ সত্যের নূতন ভাবে কেশবের উক্তি পাঠ্য করিতে আরম্ভ করিলে, নূতন ভারত, বিধান ভারত এবং মহত্তর ভারত, সত্যস্বরূপ ভগবানের মত সত্য হইয়া উঠিবে। এ দেশের লোকেদের হৃদয়ে ও আত্মায় এখনও আচার্য্যের উপদেশ, সেবকের নিবেদন ও প্রার্থনা স্থান পায় নাই। কেশবকে ত্রৈলোক্যনাথের সহিত কেবল বাংলা দেশ নয়, সমস্ত ভারত ও জগৎকে এখনও জয় করিতে হইবে। কেশবের লেখা (উক্তি) এবং ত্রৈলোক্যনাথের গান অকৃত্রিম বাংলা ভাষার এমন উৎসস্বরূপ, যাহা কখনও বন্ধ জলের মত নয়, কিন্তু দ্রুতগতিসম্পন্ন, আরামদায়ক, নবশক্তিদাতা ও নবচেতনাদাতা এরূপ প্রতীয়মান হইবে। তাহাতে লক্ষ লক্ষ লোক ব্যাধিমুক্ত হইবে, স্বাস্থ্য ফিরিয়া পাইবে। আরও কত কিছু হইবে, যে জীবন পূর্বে কখনও অনুভব করে নাই, কিংবা যে জীবনের পূর্বে আনন্দ পায় নাই, সে রূপ নবজীবন পাইবে।

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## দিন আগত ঐ

( চই জানুয়ারী, হাওড়া অধৈত-আশ্রমে পঠিত )

দিন আগত ঐ, একথা কি সত্য? সত্যই কি বহুদিনের অধঃপতিত পদানত জাতির সুদিন আগত? জাতির জাড্য দূর হইয়াছে কি? আজ এই শুভ মুপ্রভাতে সেই কথাই মনে হইতেছে। আজ এই চই জানুয়ারী সত্যই সুদিন, কেননা আজকার দিনে ব্রহ্মানন্দ শ্রীকেশবচন্দ্রের তিরোভাব তিথি ও স্বামী শ্রীমৎ বিবেকানন্দের আবির্ভাব-তিথি। বাংলার সাধনক্ষেত্রে উভয়েরই দান অপরিমেয়। শ্রীকেশবচন্দ্রের সহযোগী ও অনুগামী শ্রীযুৎ নরেন্দ্রনাথ কালক্রমে ‘স্বামী শ্রীবিবেকানন্দে’ উপনীত হইয়াও ব্রহ্মানন্দের বাণীই সমর্থন করিয়াছিলেন—অদ্য কেবলমাত্র তাহারই উল্লেখ করিব, আর তাহাতেই উভয়চরিত্রের সামঞ্জস্য ও বৈশিষ্ট্য উপলব্ধ হইবে, আর তাহাই আমাদের কাছে দেখাইয়া দিবে যে সত্যই ‘দিন আগত ঐ,’ আর সন্ন্যাসীর অভয়গীতি আমাদের কর্ণে বাজেবে ‘মাতৈঃ’। সেই বৈশিষ্ট্য কি? ব্রহ্মানন্দের ‘নববিধানই’ কেশবচরিত্রের মহত্তম দান। ব্রহ্মানন্দ কেশবচন্দ্র ঘোষণা করিলেন, “নববিধান”, আর স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ বলিলেন, “Expansion is life, Contraction is death” একই কথা। কিন্তু একথা বুঝিবার মত শক্তি, উপলব্ধি করিবার মত সামর্থ্য বাঙ্গালীর থাকিলেও আত্মবিস্মৃত আমরা আজও তাহা প্রাণে উপলব্ধি করিয়াছি কি?

দেশের বুকে যে কয়টি সমস্যা আসিয়া পড়িয়াছে, তন্মধ্যে সাম্প্রদায়িকতা একটি বিশেষ উল্লেখ-যোগ্য ব্যাপার। রাজনৈতিক ভাগবাঁটোয়ারা যে ধারায় চলিয়াছে, তাহাতে হিন্দু ও মুসলমান ভাই উভয়ের মধ্যে যেন বিশ্বাসের সূত্রটি হারাইয়া যাইতেছে। আবার হিন্দুর মধ্যে অস্পৃশ্যতা এমনই বিভীষিকাময় যে, সেই ভেদনীতির বিরুদ্ধে গান্ধীকে অভিযান করিতে হইয়াছে। বাংলাও এই সকল

ক্রটি হইতে মুক্ত নহে। ঐ সকল প্রশ্নের সমাধানেরও যথেষ্ট চেষ্টা হইয়াছে ও হইতেছে; তবে নানা প্রকার Pact হইয়াও তাহা কার্য্যকরী হইতেছে না কেন? কারণ অন্তঃসন্ধান করিলে আমরা দেখিতে পাই যে, অত্যাচার ধর্ম্মকে আমরা আচারের বেড়াঙ্কালে ফেলিয়া, আমরা স্বাধীন চিন্তার শ্রোত থরু করিয়াছি। ফলে নিজেরা পঙ্গু হইয়াছি, অপরকে গ্রহণ করিবার ক্ষমতাও হারাইয়াছি; এক কথায়—আমাদের জাতীয় প্রাণশক্তি নষ্ট করিয়া ফেলিয়াছি। যতদিন সেই শক্তি ছিল, কত বিদেশী আসিলেন—আমরা তাঁহাদের সাদরে বরণ করিলাম—কত ভিন্নধর্ম্মাবলম্বী আসিলেন, আমরা প্রেমালিঙ্গনে তাঁহাদের গ্রহণ করিয়া আপনার করিয়া লইলাম। আর এখন সেই আমরাই এমন সংকীর্ণ যে, আগাদেরই দুর্ব্যবহারে আমাদের ঘরের ভাই পর হইয়া যাইতেছে; তাই স্বামিজী ঘোষণা করিলেন, 'Contraction is death'। আর ব্রহ্মানন্দ শ্রীকেশবচন্দ্রের 'নব-বিধান'—“নববিধান সার্বভৌমিক ও জাতীয়লক্ষণাক্রান্ত। নব-বিধানে আমরা ঈশা, মুশা, মহম্মদ, বুদ্ধ, খৃষ্ট, নানক সকলেরই প্রণত ভক্ত।” “নববিধান অল্প কিছুই নহে, এ যে সেই চিরনবীন গীতার ধর্ম্ম, ‘ভারতের যুগধর্ম্মসমগ্র—ধর্ম্মের নব আন্তর্জাতিক বেশে আবির্ভাব মাত্র।’ “এইখানেই বাংলার তথা ভারতের জাতীয় বৈশিষ্ট্য, এই জাতীয় চরিত্র বা সভ্যতা হইতে ভ্রষ্ট হইয়াই তো জাতির আত্মবিস্মৃতি।” “যদিও নববিধান হিন্দুস্থানের গর্ভে জাত—তথাপি ইঁহার সঙ্গে সমস্ত পৃথিবীর সম্বন্ধ আছে। ইনি একটা ক্ষুদ্র দেশের রাজা নহেন—ইনি বিস্তীর্ণ রাজ্যের রাজা। জগজ্জননীর ইচ্ছা যে, ইনি সমস্ত বিশ্বরাজ্য অধিকার করেন। পূর্ব, পশ্চিম, উত্তর ও দক্ষিণ সমুদয় ইঁহার রাজ্যাস্তগত। কোথায় ইহুদি বিধান, কোথায় বৌদ্ধ বিধান, কোথায় শ্রীগৌরান্দ্র বিধান, কোথায় শিখ বিধান, সমুদয়ের সঙ্গে ইঁহার সম্বন্ধ। নববিধান কিছু ভাঙ্গিতে আসেন নাই, ইনি সমুদয় ধর্ম্মবিধান পূর্ণ করিতে আসিয়াছেন। ইনি হিন্দু, বৌদ্ধ, খৃষ্টান, মুসলমান সকল ধর্ম্মকে পূর্ণ করিবেন। ইঁহার নিকট কোন ধর্ম্মাবলম্বী এবং কোন জাতি অপদস্থ বা উপেক্ষিত হইবে না। ইঁহার

নিকট যিনি যাহা চাইবেন তিনি তাহাই পাইবেন। যাহার যে অভাব, তাহা ইনি পূর্ণ করিবেন।” “এই নববিধান পৃথিবীর সমুদয় ধর্মের সত্যামালার সমষ্টি। ইহাতে সমস্ত ধর্ম ও নীতি একীভূত।”

“শ্রীনববিধান” গত অর্দ্ধশতাব্দীর উপর এই অভূতাব্য সমন্বয়ের মন্ত্র ঘোষণা করিয়া আসিতেছেন। দুঃখের বিষয়, আমরা তাহা উপেক্ষাই করিয়াছি। আমরা যদি যথাসময়ে এই মন্ত্র গ্রহণ করিতে পারিতাম, তাহা হইলে সত্য সত্যই ধর্ম ধর্ম বিরোধ বিদূরিত হইত। সাম্প্রদায়িকতা বহুপূর্বেই লোপ পাইত এবং মহাত্মাভীকেও এই বৃদ্ধ বয়সে অপটু শরীর লইয়া ‘হরিজন’ আন্দোলন লইয়া বাতিবাস্ত হইতে হইত না। সর্বসমন্বয়চার্য্য শ্রীকেশবচন্দ্র ১৮৮১ খৃষ্টাব্দে প্রার্থনা করিলেন, “মেথরের সঙ্গে কেন আপনাকে সমান করি না? কে ভিন্ন শ্রেণীভুক্ত করিল? কি ধোপা, কি নাপিত, আমরা সকলেই ভাই বন্ধু। পৃথিবীতে যদি মেথর না থাকে, কত কষ্ট হয়। যদি গালে হাত দিয়া ভাবি, উজ্জল চক্ষে মেথরের ভিতরে ঠাকুরকে দেখিব। যাহারা বাড়ীর ময়লা পরিষ্কার করে, তাহারা সামান্য নয়। যেমন বাপ মা উপকার করে, তেমনি চাকর চাকরাণী উপকার করে।” কতকাল পূর্বে ব্রহ্মানন্দের অন্তরের নিভৃততম প্রদেশ হইতে এ বাণী উঠেছিল স্বামী বিবেকানন্দও তাহার প্রতিধ্বনি করিলেন—“বহুরূপে সম্মুখে তোমার ছাড়ি কোথা খুঁজিছ ঈশ্বর—জীবে প্রেম করে যেইজন, সেই জন সেবিছে ঈশ্বর”। কিন্তু আমরা তাহা গুনিয়া-ছিলাম কি?

যাহা হউক, ভুলকে ভুল বলিয়া বুঝিতে পারিলে, তাহার সংশোধনের চেষ্টাই জীবিতের লক্ষণ। আজ এই কেশবজুবিলাতে সমবেত বিশাল জনতার প্রতি চাহিলে, এই আশার বাণীই আসে যে, জ্ঞানী কেশবচন্দ্রকে চিনিয়াছে বা জানিতে চেষ্টা করিয়াছে। আর শ্রীকেশবচন্দ্রকে চিনিতে হইলে তাঁহার অবদান নববিধানকে বুঝিতে হইবে, কেশবচন্দ্রকে যথার্থ সম্মান দেখাইতে হইলে, তাঁহার বাণীর অনুসরণ করিতে হইবে, “নববিধানের” অনুশীলন করিতে

হইবে। নববিধানের সার্বভৌমসিদ্ধান্তকে জীবনে গ্রহণ করিতে পারিলে, আপনা আপনিই সাম্প্রদায়িকতা বা বর্ণভেদের খোলস খসিয়া পড়িবে—মহাত্মার সাধনা জয়যুক্ত হইবে—খাজি কি আমরা এই প্রেরণা, এই আশার বাণীটা লইয়া ফিরিব না? সত্যের জয় হইবেই হইবে। ‘নববিধান’ সত্য, ইনি অতীতে ছিলেন, বর্তমানে আছেন—আবার ভবিষ্যতেও থাকিবেন। ইহা কল্পনা নহে। “নব-বিধান জাতিকে বাঁচাইবার জন্ত ভগবদ্বিধানে আবির্ভূত।” জাতিকে বাঁচিতে হইলে আবার নূতন উদ্যমে সাধনা করিতে হইবে, গভীর সীমা অতিক্রম করিতে হইবে। আবার জনক, যাজ্ঞবল্ক্য, গার্গী, মৈত্রেয়ী, বুদ্ধ, শঙ্কর, শ্রীচৈতন্যধারায় অবগাহন করিতে হইবে। জ্ঞান ও কর্মের, যোগ ও ভক্তির সমন্বয় করিতে হইবে। বেদের ব্রহ্ম ও পুরাণের হরি এক করিতে হইবে—তবেই ‘হরিহর’, ‘হরগৌরী’ অভেদমূর্তিতে প্রকাশিত হইবে—আজ ঈশা, মুসা, যীশু, মহম্মদ, বুদ্ধ, শঙ্কর, শ্রীচৈতন্য, ব্রহ্মানন্দ প্রভৃতি বিশ্বমায়ের দুলালদের এক আসনে বসাইতে হইবে—তত্ত্ব ও বেদান্তকে একেরই অভিব্যক্তিতে পরিণত করিতে হইবে—আর তবেই আমাদের নব-বিধানের উদার বাণী গ্রহণ করিতে হইবে। জ্ঞাতি কি আজ এই আহ্বান উপেক্ষা করিবে? না—বাঁচিতে হইলে জ্ঞাতি তাহা পারে না—তাই আবার বলি “দিন আগত ঐ”!

শ্রীপুলিনবিহারী বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়।

## আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্রের দান

( ৮ই জানুয়ারী, ১৯৩৬, বুধবার, সাংকালে সাধারণ ব্রাহ্মসমাজ  
মন্দিরে স্মৃতিসভায় শ্রীযুক্ত সতীশচন্দ্র চক্রবর্তীর বক্তৃতার মর্ম্ম )

কেশবচন্দ্র যে শ্রেণীর মহাপুরুষ, ইতিহাসে তাঁহাদের কীর্ত্তি কি কি, ও স্থান কিরূপ, সেই বিষয়ে আলোচনাই এইরূপ স্মৃতিসভায় সাধারণতঃ হ'য়ে থাকে। কিন্তু আজ আমার এখানে কিছু বলবার কথা ছিল না। তাই আমি সে ভাবে প্রস্তুত হ'য়ে আসি নাই। সভাপতি মহাশয়ের আদেশে আমাকে কিছু বলবার জ্ঞান দাঁড়াতে হ'ল। আমি ঐ বিষয়ে তিনটি কথায় সংক্ষিপ্ত উল্লেখ মাত্র ক'রে, কেশবচন্দ্রের নিকটে আমার ব্যক্তিগত ধর্ম্মজীবনে আমি কি কি ঋণে ঋণী, সে বিষয়ে কিছু নিবেদন করতে প্রবৃত্ত হব; কারণ অপ্রস্তুত অবস্থায় এখন তাই আমার পক্ষে সম্ভব।

প্রথমতঃ, বিবেকানুমোদিত আচরণকে মানুষের জীবনে ও ধর্ম্মে উচ্চ স্থান দিতে শিক্ষা দিয়ে কেশবচন্দ্র ভারতের সকল কল্যাণ-চেষ্টার ইতিহাসে এবং ধর্ম্মের ইতিহাসে একটি নবযুগ প্রবর্তিত ক'রে দিয়েছেন। বহুকাল হ'তে এ কথা প্রসিদ্ধ ছিল যে, ভারতবাসী জনসাধারণের চরিত্রের প্রধান সঙ্গুণ উদারতা, সহিষ্ণুতা ও কোমলতা। এখন সেই কোমল-প্রকৃতি ভারতবাসীর চরিত্রে তার সঙ্গে যোগ হয়েছে, আদর্শরক্ষার জ্ঞান বীরত্ব, কল্যাণ কর্ম্মের জ্ঞান ত্যাগ, যাহা অসত্য, অজ্ঞায় বা অপবিত্র, তাহাকে বাধা দিতে অনমনীয় দৃঢ়তা। ভারতবাসীর চরিত্রে ও ধর্ম্মে এ ধারাটী প্রবর্তিত হয়েছে, কেশবচন্দ্রের শিক্ষা হ'তেই তার আরম্ভ।

দ্বিতীয়তঃ সকল দেশের ও সকল যুগের ধর্ম্মপ্রবর্তক মহাপুরুষদের সাধনাকে নিজ ধর্ম্মসাধনের অঙ্গীভূত ক'রে নিতে কেশবচন্দ্র শিক্ষা দিয়ে গিয়েছেন। দেহের খাওয়া-পানীয় সম্বন্ধে মানুষ স্বদেশী বিদেশীর

ভেদ করে না; কিন্তু আত্মার খাওয়া-পানীয় সম্বন্ধে মানুষ আগে স্বদেশী বিদেশীর ভেদ করত। এক দেশে উৎপন্ন শস্য অল্প দেশের মানুষের শরীর পুষ্ট ক'রতে পারে; কিন্তু মানুষ আগে ভাবত যে, বিদেশীর ধর্মভাব দিয়ে আমার আত্মার পুষ্টি কেমন ক'রে হবে? কেশবচন্দ্র শিক্ষা দিলেন যে, ধর্মবিষয়ে পর কেহ নাই। তাঁর শিক্ষা এইটুকু মাত্র নয় যে, সকল স্থান হ'তে সত্য সংগ্রহ করতে হবে; তিনি বলেছেন, সকল দেশের ও সকল সাধু ভক্তের ধর্মান্দর্শকে আমার ধর্মের অঙ্গ ব'লে সাধন না করলে, আত্মস্থ না করলে, আত্মার রসরসে পরিণত না করলে, আমাদের ধর্মসাধন সম্পূর্ণ হয় না।

তৃতীয়তঃ, বাংলা দেশের ইতিহাসে দেখা যায়, কেশবচন্দ্রের জন্ম বাংলা দেশ ভারতবর্ষের অত্যাগত প্রদেশের কাছে সম্মানিত ও তাদের সঙ্গে বন্ধুতাম্বন্ধে আবদ্ধ হ'য়ে উঠল। তিনি বাংলাদেশকে ভারতের অত্যাগত প্রদেশের ও জগতের অত্যাগত দেশের ভগিনী ক'রে দিলেন। ভারতের অন্যান্য প্রদেশের সঙ্গে বাংলাদেশের যে বন্ধুতার ফলে পরবর্তী কালে কংগ্রেসের জন্ম হয়, কেশবচন্দ্র সে বন্ধুতার প্রথম প্রবর্তক।

এখন, আমি আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্রের সঙ্গে আমার ব্যক্তিগত জীবনের যোগের কথা বলি। আমি তাঁকে চক্ষে দেখি নাই; কিন্তু আমার মনের চোখের সম্মুখে তাঁর ছবি খুব উজ্জ্বল।

আচার্য্য শিবনাথ বলতেন, ধর্ম শুধু জানবার শোনাবার শোনাবার বিষয় নয়; ধর্ম সত্য হ'লে ধর্মকে দেখা যায়। চৈতন্যদেব তো অতি অল্প কথাই বলেছেন; তিনি আপনাকে দেখিয়েই আপনার ধর্ম জগতে প্রচার করেছিলেন। কেশবচন্দ্র অনেক শিক্ষা দিয়ে গিয়েছেন বটে; কিন্তু আমাদের ধর্মজীবনে তাঁর প্রদত্ত শিক্ষার চেয়েও, তিনি মানুষটি কেমন ছিলেন, তার প্রভাব অনেক বেশী প্রবল। তিনি একজন ঈশ্বর-‘গ্রন্থ’ মানুষ ছিলেন; উঠতে বসতে, খেতে শুতে, সব সময় তিনি ঈশ্বরকে নিয়ে মত্ত হ'য়ে থাকতেন। সারাদিনের সব কাজগুলিকেও, এমন কি শরীর-সম্পর্কিত কাজ-



গুলিকেও, তিনি ব্রহ্মসহবাসের অন্তর্ভুক্ত ক'রে না নিয়ে থাকতে পারতেন না। তাঁর নবসংহিতার স্নানবিধিটা কি চমৎকার! যেন জলে নয়, ব্রহ্মে স্নান করা; যেন জল গায়ে ঢালা নয়, ব্রহ্মকে গায়ে ঢালা; যেন হরিকে দিয়ে অঙ্গমার্জন, অঙ্গ নীতল করা। এই ভাবে চলতে চলতে শেষ চৈতন্যদেবের মতন তাঁরও চোখ হয়ে গিয়েছিল আবিষ্টের চোখ, 'প্রস্তু' মানুষের চোখ; জগৎ তাঁর কাছে ব্রহ্মময় হ'য়ে নুতন হ'য়ে গিয়েছিল। এমন এক জন মানুষকে মনের চক্ষে বারে বারে দেখতে পেলে ধর্মসাধনে যে সাহায্য পাওয়া যায়, আর কোন বস্তু হ'তে তা হয় না।

ধর্ম কি? ধর্ম শুধু জ্ঞান নয়, ধ্যান নয়, পূজা নয়, কর্ম নয়। আচার্য্য Sunderland বলেছেন, ধর্ম হ'ল মানবাত্মার একটি experienceএর ধারা। ধর্ম মানবজীবনে কি কি করেন? এ প্রশ্নের একটি উত্তর এই যে, মানবজীবনকে নব নব অন্তর্ভূতির দ্বারা নানা স্বাদে স্বাদিযুক্ত করেন, তাকে নানারূপে সম্পদবান করেন, enrich করেন। কেশবচন্দ্র আমাদের শিখিয়ে গিয়েছেন, আমাদের ধর্মে কত স্বাদ আছে।

বিজ্ঞান বলেন, গোলাপ ফুল আদিম যুগে 'এক-পেটে' ছিল, অর্থাৎ তাতে এক স্তর মাত্র পাপড়ি ছিল। ক্রমে তার উন্নতি ক'রে ক'রে মানুষ তাকে বসরাই গোলাপে পরিণত করেছে; সে গোলাপে পাপড়ির কত স্তরক, তার কেমন সুন্দর বর্ণ ও কেমন সুগন্ধ! ব্রাহ্মসমাজের আদি যুগে শুধু ঈশ্বরের মহিমা ও গান্ধীর্ষ্যছোটক অর্চনা ছিল। ব্রাহ্মসমাজের সেই পূজা যেন ছিল 'এক-পেটে' গোলাপ। কেশবচন্দ্র যেন তাকে বসরাই গোলাপে পরিণত করে দিলেন। এখন ঈশ্বরকে আমরা যে ভক্তি নিবেদন করি, তাতে স্তরে স্তরে কত ভাব, তাঁর সঙ্গে কত প্রকার সম্বন্ধ; সে ভক্তিতে এখন কত স্বাদ! কেশবচন্দ্র দেখালেন যে ঈশ্বরকে কত ভাবে ভালবাসা যায়, তাঁকে নিয়ে কত কি করা যায়। শুধু ঈশ্বরের অর্চনা নয়, ঈশ্বরের বাণী শোনা যায়, সেনাপতিরূপে তাঁকে দেখে,

তঁার আদেশ পালন করা যায়, তাঁকে নিয়ে সংসার করা যায়, খেতে বসা যায়, বেড়াতে যাওয়া যায়, রান্না করা যায়, খেলা করা যায়, আমোদ কৌতুক করা যায়, মত্ত হওয়া যায়, ক্ষিপ্ত হওয়া যায়।

বহুগুণ পূর্বে চৈতন্যদেব এ ভাবের কথা বলেছিলেন। রায় রামানন্দের সঙ্গে তাঁর যে অমৃতময় কথোপকথন হয়, তাতে দেখা যায় যে, পুরাতন শীর্ণ আদর্শগুলি তাঁকে তৃপ্তি দিতে পারুল না। ‘দেবতার সন্তোষ বিধান’,—এ আদর্শে তিনি তৃপ্ত হ’লেন না। এমন কি, গীতার ‘নিস্কাম কর্ম’ যে এমন উন্নত আদর্শ,—তাও তাঁকে তৃপ্ত করতে পারুল না। তিনি তৃপ্ত হ’লেন সেই বহু-স্বাদযুক্ত ভক্তিতে, যার ভিতরে শাস্ত্র দান্ত্র সখ্য বাৎসল্য মধুরের সমাবেশ। আমাদের নববিধানী ভাইয়েরা একটি বড় মিষ্টি গান করেন, সে গান করে আমিও অনেক সময় সুখী হই; তাতে আছে,—“আমি কবে যাব সেই মধুপুর? আর কত দূর! যথা সামঞ্জস্য শাস্ত্র দান্ত্র সখ্য বাৎসল্য মধুর!”

এক সাদা আলোর ভিতরে কত বিচিত্র রং আছে, prism তা দেখিয়ে দেয়। ভক্তপ্রাণ যেন ভক্তির পক্ষে সেই prism। ভক্তির ভিতরে কত রং আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্র প্রমুখ ভক্তদের স্বচ্ছ প্রাণ তা আমাদের কাছে প্রকাশ করে। তাই ভক্তদের মুখে নিত্য নিত্য ভগবানের নূতন নূতন নাম সৃষ্টি হয়। কেশবচন্দ্র ঈশ্বরকে ‘হাশুময়ী মা’ বলেছেন; ‘রূপবান্’ ‘মনোমোহন’ বলেছেন; হাফিজের অনুকরণে ‘চিহ্নলুপ্তনকারী’ বলেছেন; শব্দক্ষেত্রে নানা রঙের সমাবেশ দেখে ব্রহ্মকে ‘সৌখীন’ বলেছেন। তাঁর ভাবে ভাবিত ধর্মসাধকদের মধ্যে এখনও ঈশ্বরের এই সকল মিষ্ট নাম প্রচলিত।

শুধু ঈশ্বরের প্রতি ভক্তিই যে বহু স্বাদযুক্ত ও বহু ভাবের সমাবেশ, তা নয়। মানবীয় প্রেমও তাই। George Eliot তাঁর Adam Bede নামক উপন্যাসে বলেছেন, প্রত্যেক সবল পুরুষের অন্তরে তার দয়িতার প্রতি যে যে প্রেম জাগে, তার মধ্যে মাতৃস্নেহের অনুরূপ একটি ভাব প্রবাহ থাকে; সে নিজ দয়িতাকে মায়ের মতন

সকল অমঙ্গল হতে রক্ষা করবার জন্য ব্যাকুল হয়। কথাটি আশ্চর্য্য, কিন্তু অতি সত্য। মানবীয় প্রেম যতই উন্নত হয়, ততই সে বহু-স্বাদযুক্ত হয়।

মানুষের ভক্তির বিষয় ছেড়ে দিয়ে যদি ঈশ্বরের অনন্ততার কথা চিন্তা করি, দেখতে পাই, এ বিষয়ে আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্র প্রমুখ ভক্তদের সাধন হতে আমরা কত মধুময় অনুভূতি লাভ করি। ঈশ্বর অনন্ত কিসে? শুধু কি দেশে কালে? শুধু কি তাঁর সৃষ্টিতে, তাঁর শক্তিতে, তাঁর মহিমা ও ঐশ্বর্য্যে? না; শুধু তা নয়। এই শ্রেণীর অনন্ততার ধারণা মনকে শুধু একঘেয়ে বৃহত্তর ছবি দেখায়; বিচিত্রতার অনুভূতি দিতে পারে না। এই mathematical infinitude জ্ঞানকে কণক্ষিপ্ত তৃপ্তি দিতে পারে বটে, কিন্তু সদয়কে তৃপ্তি দিতে পারে না। ঈশ্বরের অনন্ততার প্রধান স্বাদ মানুষের সঙ্গে তাঁর বিচিত্র লীলায়; বিশেষক'রে ভক্তদের সঙ্গে তাঁর বিচিত্র মধুময় লীলায়। এ অফুরন্ত স্বাদটি যোগ ক'রে দিয়ে আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্র আমাদের ঈশ্বরারাদনার মধ্যে 'অনন্ত' স্বরূপে একটি অমৃতময় ধারা প্রবর্তিত করে দিয়েছেন।

শুধু ঈশ্বর ও মানুষের সম্বন্ধ বিষয়ে নয়, সাধুভক্তদের প্রতি আমাদের হৃদয়ের ভাবেতেও আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্র একটি অপূর্ণ স্বাদ সঞ্চার ক'রে দিয়ে গিয়েছেন। সাধুভক্তদের প্রতি আমাদের মনের, ভাবে ক্রমশঃ অধিক অধিক অন্তর্মুখীন চারিটা স্তর আছে। (১) তাঁরা বিদেশী বলে, অথবা ভিন্ন বৃগের মানুষ বলে, আমাদের মন বিমূখ হ'বে না, এই উদারতার ভাবটি প্রথমে শিক্ষা করতে হয়। কেশবচন্দ্র যে এ শিক্ষা দিয়ে গিয়েছেন, তা আমি প্রথমেই বলেছি। (২) আরও ভিতরে গেলে আসে, ঐতিহাসিক গবেষণার স্তর; সাধুদের সম্বন্ধে সত্য নির্ণয় করবার জন্য মনের ব্যাকুল ভাব। (৩) মানুষের ধর্মসাধনে যা প্রয়োজন, তা কিন্তু আরও একটু ভিতরের ব্যাপার; তা হ'ল শ্রদ্ধাপূর্ণ শিষ্যত্ব স্বীকার। এই শ্রদ্ধাপূর্ণ শিষ্যত্ব-স্বীকারের ফলেই আমরা আমাদের ধর্মসাধনে ভক্তদের জীবন ও উক্তি হ'তে অনুপ্রাণন লাভ করি।

(৪) কিন্তু আরও ভিতরের স্তর আছে। কোনো মানুষকে জানা বা তাঁর উপদেশ অধ্যয়ন করা, এবং তাঁর সঙ্গে পরিচিত হওয়া, এই দুই এক নয়। ব্যাকুল ধর্মসাধকের হৃদয় উৎসুক হয় যে, কত দিনে ভক্তের সঙ্গে আমার ব্যক্তিগত পরিচয় হবে; কত দিনে এমন হবে যে, আমি তাঁকে ডেকে নিজের সব মনের কথা বলতে পারব, আমি তাঁর আশ্বাসবাণী, উৎসাহবাণী, আদরের বাণী শুনতে পাব, তাঁর সঙ্গে আমার চোখে চোখে চাওয়া হবে, মনের কথার বিনিময় হবে; আমি তাঁর অন্তরঙ্গ দলের একজন মানুষ হব।

এই স্তরে না পৌঁছানো পর্য্যন্ত ভক্তসঙ্ঘের প্রকৃত সফল লাভ করা যায় না। আমার যৌবনে আমি মখন জীবনের নানাবিধ সংগ্রামে বড়ই জর্জরিত ও ভারাক্রান্ত ছিলাম, আমি অনুভব করতে চেষ্টা করতাম যে, যীশু আমাকেও ডাকছেন; তাঁর সেই অমৃতময় আহ্বানটি,—“যাহারা পরিশ্রান্ত ও ভারাক্রান্ত, আমার কাছে এস, আমি তোমাদিগকে বিশ্রাম দান করিব”,—আমার জন্য ও আসচে। আমি এই অনুভূতির দ্বারা বড় সাহসনা লাভ করতাম।

কিন্তু ভক্তদের সঙ্গে এইরূপ যোগস্থাপন ব্রাহ্মসমাজে অনেকেই বুঝতে পারেন না। আমার যৌবনের ঐ অনুভূতির কথা শুনে সে সময় আমাকে আমার একজন পূজনীয় ব্যক্তি বলেছিলেন, “তবে তুমি গ্রীষ্টান হ’লে না কেন?” কি আশ্চর্য্য! আমি কি যীশুকে ঈশ্বরের স্থানে বসাই? তা তো নয়। কিন্তু তাঁকে মানুষ বলে জেনেও, তাঁর সঙ্গে এতখানি অন্তরঙ্গতা স্থাপন না হ’লে তাঁর কাছ থেকে আমার যা পাওয়া সম্ভব, তার অনেকখানি কম পড়বে তা। আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্র এই অর্থেই ধর্মসাধনের ভিতরে “সাধু-সমাগম” নামে একটি নূতন অমৃতময় সাধন যোগ ক’রে দিয়েছিলেন।

আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্রের এই ভাবে ভাবিত হ’য়ে ত্রৈলোক্যনাথ সাত্তাল মহাশয় তাঁর একটা গানে লিখেছিলেন, “করুব প্রেমভিক্ষা তাঁদের (ভক্তদের) চরণে ধ’রে”, অর্থাৎ ভক্তেরা যেন আমাকেও তাঁদের ভালবাসার মানুষগুলির অন্তর্গত ক’রে লন, যেন আমাকেও

তাদের অন্তরঙ্গ ব'লে স্বীকার কবেন, মন এই কামনা করে। ভক্তদের সঙ্গে এ ভাবে ঘনিষ্ঠ হতে না পারলে আমাদের প্রাণের গভীরতম পিপাসা তৃপ্ত হয় না।

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## ব্রহ্মানন্দ কেশবচন্দ্রের স্মৃতিরক্ষা

( প্রবাসী ১৩৪২ মাঘ পৃঃ ৫৮৯ )

মহাপুরুষগণ যে কাজ করিয়া যান তাহার দ্বারাই তাহাদের স্মৃতিরক্ষা হয় ইহা সত্য বটে; কিন্তু তাঁহাদের স্মৃতিরক্ষার জ্ঞা উপকৃত ও রুতজ্ঞ জনগণুলীরও চেষ্টা করা উচিত। ইহা সম্বোধের বিষয়, যে গতমাসে খালবার্ট হলে শ্রীগুরু শ্রীমা প্রসাদ মুখোপাধ্যায়ের সভাপতিত্বে ব্রহ্মানন্দ কেশবচন্দ্র সেন মহাশয়ের স্মৃতির প্রতি সম্মান প্রদর্শনার্থ যে সভার অধিবেশন হয়, তাহাতে সভাপতি মহাশয় নিম্নলিখিত মর্ম্মের একটি প্রস্তাব উত্থাপন করেন এবং তাহা সর্ব্ব-সম্মতিক্রমে গৃহীত হয়।

“ ১৯৩৮ সালে ব্রহ্মানন্দ কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের শতবার্ষিক জন্মোৎসব উপলক্ষ্যে তাঁহার স্মৃতিরক্ষার্থে নিম্নলিখিত কার্য্যগুলি করিবার জ্ঞা একটি কমিটি গঠিত হইবে।

- ( ১ ) সর্ব্বসাধারণের জ্ঞা একটি অট্টালিকা এবং হলগৃহ নির্মাণ।
- ( ২ ) সর্ব্ব ধর্ম্ম এবং সংস্কৃতি সম্বন্ধীয় পুস্তকাবলীপূর্ণ একটি পাঠাগার স্থাপন।
- ( ৩ ) ছাত্রদের মধ্যে আধুনিক বৈজ্ঞানিক গবেষণার জ্ঞা একটি গবেষণাগার প্রতিষ্ঠা।
- ( ৪ ) একটি ব্যায়ামাগার এবং
- ( ৫ ) বৃত্তিমূলক শিক্ষার জ্ঞা একটি কারখানা স্থাপন।

কমিটি অবিলম্বে গঠন করিয়া অর্থসংগ্রহের চেষ্টা এখন হইতেই করা আবশ্যিক।

কেশবচন্দ্র প্রধানতঃ ধর্মোপদেষ্টা বলিয়াই পরিচিত। আধ্যাত্মিকতা ও ধর্মের প্রচারে তাঁহার কৃতিত্ব অসাধারণ। স্মৃতিসভায় ডাক্তার সর্ব্ব নীলরতন সরকার বলেন, “সর্ব্ববিষয়ে, বিশেষতঃ ধর্মবিষয়ে, তাঁহার প্রতিভা আমাদিগকে বিস্মিত করে। সকল ধর্মের মধ্যেই যে একটি অচ্ছেদ্য যোগ আছে, ইহা তিনি আমাদিগকে স্পষ্টরূপে ও প্রথম শুনান।”

ধর্মবিষয়ে নেতৃত্ব ভিন্ন অল্প নানা দিকেও তাঁহার কৃতিত্ব আছে, তাঁহার ‘ইণ্ডিয়ান মিরর’ ও ‘স্বলভ সমাচার’ সর্ব্বসাধারণকে রাজনীতি চর্চার সুযোগ দিয়াছিল। তাঁহার ‘স্বলভ সমাচার’ বঙ্গের প্রথম সস্তা খবরের কাগজ। শিক্ষাদান ও মাদকতা-নিবারণের ক্ষেত্রেও তিনি খুব কাজ করিয়াছিলেন। তাঁহার বাংলা বক্তৃতা ও উপদেশ-সমূহ কথিত বাংলার একটি তাৎকালিক আদর্শ বলিয়া গৃহীত হইবার যোগ্য। বিলাতে তিনি তাঁহার অনতিক্রান্ত বাগ্মিতা সহকারে যে-সকল বক্তৃতা করেন, তাহার দ্বারা ইংরেজরা বুঝিতে পারে, যে ভারতীয়েরা, বাঙালীরা, নিকৃষ্ট জাতি নহে। “আমরা অধম, আমরা নিকৃষ্ট” এইরূপ ধারণা রাজনৈতিক ও অগ্রবিধ উন্নতির পথে একটি প্রধান বাধা। কেশবচন্দ্রের বাগ্মিতা দ্বারা এই প্রকার ধারণা ( অর্থাৎ **inferiority complex** ) তৎকালে যে-পরিমাণে বিদূরিত হইয়াছিল, সেই পরিমাণে পরোক্ষভাবে রাজনৈতিক প্রচেষ্টাও অজ্ঞাতসারে বললাভ করিয়াছিল—যদিও তিনি স্বয়ং রাজনৈতিক আন্দোলনকারী ছিলেন না।

আজকাল কিছুদিন হইতে অস্পৃশ্যতা দূরীকরণের জন্ত আন্দোলন ও চেষ্টা হইতেছে। মাহাত্মা গান্ধী বর্ত্তমান আন্দোলনের প্রধান নেতা। এ বিষয়ে তাঁহার প্রাপ্য প্রশংসা তাঁহাকে আমরা পূর্ণমাত্রাতেই বরাবর দিয়া আসিতেছি এবং এখনও দি। সেই সঙ্গে সঙ্গে ইতিহাসের দিক হইতে আমাদের কয়েকটা কথা মনে রাখা আবশ্যিক।

## অস্পৃশ্যতাবিরোধী প্রচেষ্টার কিছু পূর্বকথা

( প্রবাসী ১৩৪২—মাঘ, পৃ: ৫৯০ )

অস্পৃশ্যতা জনগত ও রংশগত জাতিভেদের অপকৃষ্টতম ও সর্বাপেক্ষা অনিষ্টকর রূপ বটে। কিন্তু জাতিভেদ দূর না করিলে অস্পৃশ্যতা সমূলে বিনষ্ট হইবে না। মহাত্মা গান্ধীও ইহা বুঝিয়াছেন বলিয়া সেদিন “হরিজন” পত্রে লিখিয়াছেন, “Caste must go,” “জাতিভেদকে বিদায় দিতে হইবে।” আধুনিক যুগে মত প্রচার দ্বারা ও আচরণ দ্বারা হিন্দুসমাজের জাতিভেদ দূর করিতে প্রথম চেষ্টা করেন ব্রাহ্মসমাজ। রামমোহন রায় মৃত্যুঞ্জয়াচার্য্য প্রণীত জাতিভেদ-বিরোধী “বজ্রসূচী” সামুদ্রিক প্রকাশ করিয়া, ব্যক্তিগত কোন কোন আচরণে জাতিভেদ না মানিয়া, এবং সমুদ্র পার হইয়া ইউরোপ গিয়া জাতিভেদের বিরুদ্ধে প্রথম কিছু করিয়াছিলেন। কিন্তু সমাজসংস্কার-ক্ষেত্রে সতীদাহ-নিবারণ এবং নারী জাতির অকল্যাণকর অগ্র কোন কোন ব্যবস্থা ও প্রথার পরিবর্তন লইয়াই তিনি প্রধানতঃ ব্যস্ত ছিলেন, অসবর্ণ বিবাহ আদির প্রচলন বা অস্পৃশ্যতা দূরীকরণের সাফাৎ চেষ্টা তিনি কিছু করেন নাই। আমরা যতদূর জানি, মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর ব্যক্তিগত আচরণে অস্পৃশ্যতা মানিতেন না, কিন্তু সাফাৎভাবে জাতিভেদ নষ্ট করিবার কোন চেষ্টা করেন নাই। সেই চেষ্টা কেশবচন্দ্রই নানা দিক দিয়া প্রথম করেন। অসবর্ণ বিবাহ আদি তিনি প্রথম চালান। স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ অবনত জাতিদের অভ্যুত্থান দ্বারা ভারতবর্ষ ও হিন্দুজাতি শক্তিশালী হইবে মনে করিতেন ও বলিয়া গিয়াছেন। তাহাদের উপর তিনি খুব আস্থা রাখিতেন। কিন্তু তাঁহার সম্প্রদায়ভুক্ত লোকেরাই কেহ কেহ লিখিয়াছেন ( এবং আমরাও দেখিতেছি ) যে তাঁহার শিষ্যানুশিষ্যেরা সামাজিক রীতিনীতি ও প্রথা সম্বন্ধে তাঁহার মতগুলিকে কার্য্যে পরিনত করিবার নিমিত্ত বিশেষ কিছু চেষ্টা করেন নাই, যদিও তাঁহারা আর্জুনাগে প্রভূত প্রশংসনীয় চেষ্টা

এবং শিক্ষাবিস্তারার্থ কিছু চেষ্টা করিয়াছেন। অম্পৃশ্যতা দূরীকরণ কংগ্রেসের রুতাসমূহের অঙ্গীভূত করিতে মহারাষ্ট্রের ব্রাহ্মধর্মপ্রচারক শ্রীযুক্ত দিঠল রাম শিন্দে মহাত্মা গান্ধীকে প্রবৃত্ত করেন। তাহার আগে হইতেই শিন্দে মহাশয় বোম্বাই প্রেসিডেন্সীতে অবনতশ্রেণী-সহায়ক মিশন (Depressed Classes Mission) চালাইয়া আসিতেছিলেন। এই মিশন এখনও বিদ্যমান ও সক্রিয় আছে। ব্রাহ্মসমাজের শ্রীযুক্ত কে রঙ্গরাও কংগ্রেস এ-বিষয়ে মন দিবার আগে হইতেই মাদ্রা়ালোরে ঐ প্রকার কাজ করিতেছিলেন। তাঁহার মৃত্যুর পরও এই কাজ এখনও চলিতেছে। আর্য্যসমাজ অম্পৃশ্যতা দূরীকরণের অনেক চেষ্টা করিয়া আসিতেছেন।

### সংবাদ প্রভাকর

(কবি রাজকৃষ্ণ রায় প্রণীত “কেশব বিয়োগ”

পরিশিষ্ট চইতে উদ্ধৃত, ১২৯০)

কেবল বাঙ্গালী জাতি—ভারতের হিন্দুজাতি নহে, ভারতের প্রত্যেক বিভিন্ন জাতির মধ্যে একমাত্র কেশবচন্দ্র সেন যেরূপ জীবদশায় জগতের প্রতি প্রাস্তে পরিচিত, এবং সম্মানিত হইয়াছেন, অত্র কোন বাঙ্গালী—কোন হিন্দু কোন ভারতীয়ের ভাগ্যে সেরূপ সম্মান লাভ ঘটে নাই, ইতিহাস তাহার সাক্ষ্য দিতেছে, অনন্তকাল সাক্ষ্য দিবে। মহাত্মা রামমোহন রায়, ও প্রিন্স্ দ্বারকানাথ ঠাকুর ইংলণ্ডে মহাসম্মান প্রাপ্ত হইয়াছিলেন বটে, কিন্তু কেশবচন্দ্রের সম্মান তাঁহাদিগের অপেক্ষা সহস্রাংশে অধিক। কেবল ইংলণ্ড নহে, জার্মানি, আমেরিকা প্রভৃতি সভ্য জনপদেও তিনি জীবদশায় অসাধারণ পবিত্রচেতা পুরুষ বলিয়া সম্মানান্বিত করিয়াছিলেন। তাঁহার পবিত্র স্বভাব, উদার সাধুচরিত্র, ধর্ম্মময় জীবন, বিশ্বপ্রেমিকতা, মানব সমাজের ঐহিক পারত্রিক মঙ্গলেচ্ছা তাঁহাকে একপক্ষে যেমন দেবরূপে পরিণত করিয়া দেয়, অত্র পক্ষে তাঁহার অতুলনীয় বাগ্মিতা, সমাজসংস্কারেচ্ছা, নৈতিক নিষ্পলতা, মিষ্টভাষিতা, জ্ঞানগর্ভ



সদালাপ, তাঁহাকে সাধারণ মানবশ্রেণীর সমধিক উচ্চে উত্তীর্ণ করিয়া দেয়। যে ব্যক্তি বোর পামণ্ড, যাহার জীবন কেবল পাপময়, যে ব্যক্তি অজ্ঞানতাবশতঃ তাঁহাকে চিনিত না, যে ব্যক্তি তাঁহার কার্য-কলাপের অমুঠানের বিবেচনা ছিল, সে ব্যক্তিও তাঁহার সেই বিধান-সম্মত প্রবল বক্তৃতা শ্রবণে তাঁহাকে অন্তরের সহিত সাধুবাদ না করিয়া থাকিতে পারিত না। তবে তাঁহার সেই উচ্চ অঙ্গের চিন্তা-প্রসূত নীতিবাক্যাবলী—নব নব উপদেশ অনন্তবুদ্ধি মানবমণ্ডলীর পক্ষে প্রেহেলিকার জ্বায় বোধ হইত। তাঁহার রূপক উক্তির অর্থ সাধারণে হৃদয়ঙ্গম করিতে পারিত না, সেই জগৎই অনেকে তাঁহাকে চিনিতে পারিত না, কিন্তু কোন ব্যক্তিই তাঁহার বক্তৃতা শ্রবণে বিমুগ্ধ না হইয়া যাইত না। পাশ্চাত্য জগৎ হইতে যখন যে প্রগাঢ় পণ্ডিত—বিখ্যাত বাগ্মী পাদরী, কলিকাতায় আসিতেন, তিনিই কমলকুটীরে তাঁহার সহিত সাক্ষাৎ করিতে যাইতেন। তিনিই আশা করিতেন যে, তর্কতরঙ্গে কেশবচন্দ্রকে পরাস্ত করিয়া খৃষ্টধর্ম্মে দীক্ষিত করিব। কিন্তু কি বিচিত্র ব্যাপার! তিনিই আবার কয়েক দণ্ড কেশবের সহিত আলাপ করিয়া পরাস্ত হইয়া আসিতেন। পরাস্ত হইলেও অসন্তুষ্টচিত্তে ফিরিতেন না, কেশবচন্দ্রের সোণা প্রেমময় মুক্তি, অমৃতময় বাক্য তাঁহাকে বিমুগ্ধ করিয়া দিত। যৎকালে তিনি ইংলণ্ড গমন করেন তৎকালে সহস্র সহস্র লোক তাঁহার বক্তৃতা শ্রবণে—পবিত্রচরিত্র দর্শনে—জ্ঞানগর্ভ নব নব ধর্ম্মব্যাখ্যা শ্রবণে একেবারে বিমুগ্ধ হইয়া গিয়াছিলেন।



### সচিত্র দেবগণের মর্ত্যে আগমন

( দুর্গাচরণ রায় প্রণীত )

প্রথম সংস্করণ পৃঃ ৫৬১—দ্বিতীয় সংস্করণ পৃঃ ৬৯৮-৬৯৯

“ইনি (কেশবচন্দ্র সেন) বিলাত হইতে প্রত্যাগমন করিয়া ভারত সংস্কারক সভা সংস্থাপিত করেন। এই সময় এক পয়সা মূল্যের

স্বলভসমাচার প্রচার হয়। ঐ পত্র এই সভার অধীন আছে। এই সময় ইণ্ডিয়ান মিরর ( Indian Mirror ) দৈনিক আকারে হয়। ইনি ( কেশবচন্দ্র ) আলবার্ট হল ( Albert Hall ) নামক একটা দালান প্রস্তুত করিয়া কলিকাতার বাঙ্গালীদিগের বিশেষ অভাব মোচন করিয়াছেন। বাঙ্গালা ভাষায় ইহার বিলক্ষণ অধিকার ছিল। ইনি বাঙ্গালা ভাষার শ্রীবুদ্ধিকারীদিগের একজন অগ্রগণ্য।” \*

### বিপিনচন্দ্র পাল বলেন

“ রাজা রামমোহন এবং মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ উভয়েই প্রাচীন ঋষি বাক্যের সাহায্যে ব্রহ্মোপাসনা করার পক্ষপাতী ছিলেন। তাঁহাদের ব্রাহ্মসমাজে শাস্ত্র পাঠ হইত, সাধকেরা নিজ নিজ মনে গায়ত্রীমন্ত্র জপ করিতেন। ব্রাহ্মসমাজীত হইত এবং ধর্ম্যদিশে আচার্য্য উপদেশ দিতেন বা ধর্ম্যতত্ত্বের ব্যাখ্যা করিতেন। কেশবচন্দ্র পর-মেশ্বরের মহিমা বর্ণনা করিয়া তাঁহার আরাধনা করাও ব্রহ্মোপাসনার অঙ্গীভূত করিয়া লন। শাস্ত্রবাক্য আবৃত্তি করিয়া উপাসনার একটা দোষ এই দাঁড়াইয়া যায় যে তাহাতে উপাসক অনেক সময় কেবল টিয়াপাখীর মত কতকগুলি শ্লোকই উচ্চারণ করিয়া যান, কিন্তু তাহা দ্বারা দেবতার উপলব্ধি হয় না। কেশবচন্দ্র সে আরাধনাপদ্ধতি প্রবর্তিত করেন তাহার ফলে প্রথম প্রথম উপাসকদিগের অন্তরে অপূর্ণ ভাবোচ্ছাস আরম্ভ করে। কেশবচন্দ্রের অলৌকিক বাগ্মিতা শক্তি প্রভাবে তাঁহার আরাধনাতে উপাসকদিগের চিত্তকে একেবারে অভিভূত করিয়া তুলিত। সে কালের ব্রাহ্মদিগের মধ্যে গুনিয়াছি

\*.V.B — Underlines গুলি ও bracketsএর মধ্যে লেখাগুলি সম্পাদক দ্বারা সংযোযিত হইল।

যে, এক একদিনের আরাধনার নেশা সারা সপ্তাহে তাহাদিগের দেহ, মন প্রাণকে বিভোর করিয়া রাখিত। সিদ্ধবাক্ বক্তামাত্রেই শ্রোতৃবর্গের অন্তরে স্বল্পবিস্তর শক্তিসঞ্চার করিয়া থাকেন। এই শক্তিসঞ্চারকেই আধুনিক যুরোপীয় মনস্তত্ত্বে হিপ্নটিজম্ (hypnotism) কহে। এই শক্তিসঞ্চারের ফলে মানুষ নিমেষে দেবতা হইয়া উঠে। অতি নিকট লোকেও উচ্চতম আধ্যাত্মিক প্রেরণা লাভ করিয়া আপনার প্রকৃতিগত নীচতাকে ভুলিয়া যায়। এই শক্তিসঞ্চারের ফলে কেশবচন্দ্রের আরাধনার দ্বারা সে সময়ে ব্রাহ্মদিগের মধ্যে অপূর্ণ ভাবোচ্ছাস জাগিয়া উঠিত। এই আরাধনার আর একটা বিশেষত্ব এই ছিল যে, ইহা প্রত্যেক সাধকের ব্যক্তিগত জীবনের অতি অন্তরঙ্গ ভাবগুলিকে নাড়িয়া চাড়িয়া দিত। শাস্ত্রাবলম্বনে ব্রহ্মোপাসনাতে সর্বদা ইহা সম্ভব হইত না। কেশবচন্দ্র এই আরাধনা পদ্ধতি প্রবর্তিত করিয়া ব্রাহ্মসমাজের উপাসনাতে একটা অপূর্ণ আন্তরিকতা আনিয়া দেন। এই আন্তরিকতাই সেকালের ব্রাহ্মসমাজের ব্রহ্মোপাসনার বিশেষত্ব ছিল। আর এই আন্তরিকতার গুণেই বিজয়রূপ, অঘোরনাথ প্রভৃতি ব্রাহ্মসমাজের সাধকেরা নিজ নিজ সাধনায় এতটা অগ্রসর হইতে পারিয়াছিলেন।

কেশবচন্দ্রের যে অধিকার ছিল, সকলের ত সে অধিকার নাই! নিজের বাকশক্তির প্রভাবে কেশবচন্দ্র নিজেও যেমন মাতিতেন, অপরকেও সেইরূপ মাতাইতে পারিতেন, বিধাতা সকলকে এই শক্তি দেন না।”

“প্রবর্তক বিষয়—বিজয়রূপ”—লেখক বিপিনচন্দ্র পাল পৃ: ৮০, ৮১

## সাক্ষ্যদান

( কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ভূতপূর্ব অধ্যাপক শ্রীযুক্ত বিজয়চন্দ্র  
মজুমদার বি,এল, কর্তৃক ৩নং রমানাথ মজুমদার ষ্ট্রীটে, প্রচার-  
কার্যালয়ের উৎসবে বিবৃত এবং শ্রীমান্ সত্যীকুমার  
চট্টোপাধ্যায় কর্তৃক লিখিত )

আমি অনেকদিন থেকে, প্রায় ১৮৮৫ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের পর থেকেই  
কলিকাতার বাহিরে আছি। আমার অনেক দিনকার প্রাণের  
ইচ্ছা—বক্তৃতা নয়, ধীরে ধীরে, তরুণদের কাছে আমার অন্তরের  
কতকগুলি কথা বলতে। এতদিন সন্যোগ হয় নাই; আগে সন্যোগ  
হলেই ভাল হ'ত। এখন আমার শরীর অত্যন্ত অসুস্থ, বেশীক্ষণ  
বসিতে পারি না, দুঃশীর্ণও হারিয়েছি। তবু আমায় বলিতে হবে,  
সেই সব আগেকার কথা।

আমায় আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্রের কাছে প্রথম উপস্থিত করেন  
ত্রৈলোকা বাবু ( সঙ্গীতাচার্য্য ভাই ত্রৈলোক্যনাথ সান্ন্যাল ), ছোট্ট-  
বেলায়, ব্রাহ্মসমাজের বাইরে। তখন সমাজ-বিদ্রোহ ছিল না, পরম  
শান্তিতে সাধনার নূতন নূতন স্তর উন্মুক্ত হচ্ছে। সেই সময় মাঝে  
মাঝে গিয়ে আমি তাঁর কাছে বসিতাম। বুঝিতাম না, তবু  
ভাল লাগিতো। স্তাবক বলিতে চান বলুন, কিন্তু ভাল লাগিতো।  
সেই মুহূ, বালক ভুলানো সহাস্ত কথা। তখন মনেই হোতোনা  
যে, আবার সিংহবিক্রমে বক্তৃতা, সিংহগর্জন তাঁরই ভিতর দিয়ে  
বেরোতে পারে। কালীচরণ বাবু ( রেঃ কালীচরণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় )  
প্রভৃতি অনেকে ধর্মমত ভিন্ন অগ্ন্যাগ্নি বিষয়ে তাঁহার মতামত নিতে  
আসতেন। Pleasant Conversation ! ১৮৮১ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের মাঝামাঝি  
Oxford Mission এ যখন থাকিতাম, সেখানে কথায় কথায় Groule  
সাহেবের সঙ্গে তাঁর ( আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্রের ) বিষয় কথা হয়।

তিনি বলেন, Delightful.....Delightful! তাঁর কথাবার্তায় সবাই আনন্দ উপভোগ করিতেন—তর্ক ছিল না, মুগ্ধ করিতো; অর্থ বুঝিতাম না, কিন্তু কেন জানি ভাল লাগিতো। মুখের সে কি প্রসন্নতা! কখনও, সারাজীবনে তাঁহার মুখে বিষাদ দেখি নাই। সদাই হাসিতেন, প্রফুল্লতার বিকাশ, দৃঢ় বিশ্বাস, বিশাল বাহ্যিক শরীর। সেই সৌম্যমূর্তি অনেকের স্মরণে আছে। তেমন আদর্শ পুরুষ আর দেখি নাই। স্পষ্ট বলিতে পারি, Personal bias নয়, আদর্শ নয়। প্রতিজ্ঞাপূর্ণ মুখ, তাতে হাসি খেলা করে বেড়াচ্ছে। কোন রকম পারিবারিক বিরক্তির কারণ হলে শুধু চোখ বুঝে বসতেন। একটুখানি কিছু হলেই, এমন করে চোখ বুঝে বসতেন যে, কাউকে আর তর্ক করিতে হইত না। তাঁহার চির অবলম্বন, চিরসঙ্গীর সঙ্গে এক হয়ে যেতেন। Lily Cottage এর পুকুর ধারে বসিতেন, ঠিক যেন—যোগী। কঠোরতা নাই, ক্রুদ্ধ সাধন নাই, প্রশান্ত নরম তৃপ্তিমাখা মুখমণ্ডল। যেন আনন্দকে প্রত্যক্ষ করছেন। মহর্ষির দেওয়া ব্রহ্মানন্দ নাম বর্ণে বর্ণে সার্থক হয়েছে। ছটফটানি কখনও দেখি নাই, সর্বদা প্রসন্ন, মুখ উজ্জল; তাঁহার উপর বিশ্বাস, তাঁহাকে যুক্তি তর্ক দিয়া নয়, শ্রদ্ধা দিয়া প্রত্যক্ষ করিতেন। মুখটীও তাহার সাক্ষ্য দিত।

১৮৮১ হইতে ১৮৮৩, সেই পুণ্যস্মৃতি। আমায় একটা স্থান দেওয়া হয়েছিল। উপাসনা শুনিতাম। তিনি সিঁড়ি দিয়া উঠিয়া বায়ের ছোট ঘরে বসিতেন। ডাইনে প্রচারকেরা, আর বায়ের দেয়াল পিছনে করিয়া আমি বসিতাম। সেই উপাসনা! সত্য, প্রত্যক্ষ, কাছে বসে বসে আনন্দে তাঁহার সঙ্গে কথা কইতেন। তিনি কার কাছে নেই? ভগবান এত কাছে? সে উপাসনা প্রাচীন Godhead এর বা রামপ্রসাদী নয়। এ ভাবা প্রত্যক্ষ। আপনার মা বাপের কাছে বসে কথা কওয়ার মত কথা। আর এই উপাসনায় তাঁর মুখে কি প্রসন্নতা আসিতো!

১৮৮১ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের প্রকাণ্ড কোলাহল। তাঁর “নববিধান” কথা নিয়ে বহু আলোচনা, বক্তৃতা, তীব্র আক্রমণ হচ্ছে। নগেন্দ্রচন্দ্র মিত্র

আমায় একটা বক্তৃতা শুনিতে নিয়ে গেলেন। সে সব শুনে আমার, আর আমাদের মধ্যে তখন ছিলেন ভবানীদা ( ভবানীচরণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় বা উপাধ্যায় ব্রহ্মবান্ধব), আরো অনেকে—সে বক্তৃতায় আমাদের মনে একটা আন্দোলন উঠিলো, সন্দেহ হল। আমরা সে সমালোচনায় তুষ্ট হইলাম না। স্থির হ'ল, কেশবচন্দ্রকে সোজা এবিষয়ে জিজ্ঞাসা করিতে চাইবে। আমাকেই তাঁহারা জোর করে মুখপাত্র করিলেন। কেন করিলেন, জানি না। সব এসে বসিলেন। আমি গিয়ে এগিয়ে তাঁর পায়ে গোড়ায় বসিলাম। জিজ্ঞাসা করিলাম—“এ ধর্মতো পুরাণো কালেও ছিল, তবে নববিধান বলিবার দরকার কি?” সে কি soft হাসি চোখে—আমার দিকে তাকিয়ে বলেন, “ধর্মের যে আর কোনও নাম দিতে পারিনে।” আরো গোটাকতক কথা বলেছিলেন। আমার উপর তার impression কথায় ব্যক্ত করিতে পারি না। আমার অন্তরে চিরদিনের মত মুদ্রিত হয়ে গেল। এমন সহজ আর সোজা কথা কখন শুনি নাই। তার থেকে, পরে আমার যা মনে হয়েছে, তাই বলিতেছি। সত্যি, ধর্মের আর কোন নাম হতে পারে? সাম্প্রদায়িকতা-গন্ধহীন নাম। “নব” আমি প্রথম বললাম বলে নয় কিন্তু নূতন, আশ্চর্য্য নূতন বলেই। সেই কথার অর্থ এই যে, মানুষের যে ধর্ম, যেমন ক্রমবিকাশ জীবনে, তেমনি ধর্মের ক্রমবিকাশও প্রতিমুহূর্তে, প্রতিপলে। প্রতিদিন প্রতিমুহূর্তে নূতন করে অগ্রসর হতে হবে। যদি তাহা না হয়, যদি নিত্য নূতনতা না আসে, যদি বাঁধা বুলি মুখস্থ করি, তবে ধর্ম কোথায়? তবে কে যেন রোধ করেছে পথ! কেবল মালা জপ করে যাচ্ছি। মানুষের মুখের দিকে তাকিয়ে, ভগবানের দয়া যদি নূতন করে ঝরে না পড়ে, নূতন করে প্রত্যেকটা সম্বন্ধ নূতন না হয়, তবে ধর্ম কোথায়? সে ধর্ম যে বদ্ধ রুদ্ধতা। *Pleasure of Life* এর গ্রন্থকার বলেছেন যে পৃথিবীকে সুখী করার জ্ঞান প্রকৃতি এই যে কত ছবি দেখায়, তারা নিত্য নূতন নূতন বেশ ধরে। পুরাতন আকাশ নিত্য নূতন, পুরাতন বাতাস নিত্য নূতন, ফুটন্ত ফুলের শোভা সেতো প্রতিমুহূর্তে নূতন, শ্রোতস্থিনীর

ধারা নিত্য নূতন। এই নিত্য নূতনতাই যে ধর্মেরও aspect। ধর্মের সেইরূপই যে “নববিধান”। এমন মোহনমন্ত্র আর কি আছে? “নববিধান” কথাটির মতন এমন কোনও বাণী পাই নাই, যা ধর্মের পথে এগিয়ে দেবার এত সহায়তা করে। ধর্মের যে সত্যাকার রূপ “নববিধান” এই একটি কথায় যেমন প্রকাশ করে, এমনটী আর শুনিনি।

তার আরেকটা বাণীর কথা বলি। তিনি অসুস্থ শরীরে, দিনের বেলায় মন্দিরে উপাসনা করিবেন ও জীবন-গ্রন্থের কথা নিবেদন করিবেন ব’লে প্রচার করিলেন। তখন পাছে জায়গা না পাই, তাড়াতাড়ি এসে সবাই বসিতাম। খুব ভিড় হ’ত, মন্দির ভরে যেতো। “নববিধানের” বাণী যুক্ত হল, অঙ্গে মনে। নূতন কথা “জীবনবেদ”। তারা এমন করে প্রাচীনকে আঁকড়ে ছিল যে, তারা যখন এই কথা নিয়ে আমার সঙ্গে তর্ক করত, আমি এ বিষয়ে কথা বলে শব্দের পবিত্রতা নষ্ট করি নাই। শাস্ত্র মানতে হবে, বা শাস্ত্র কিছুই নাই। উপাধ্যায়ের (উপাধ্যায় ভাই গৌরগোবিন্দ রায়) “মুণ্ডবিদ্যালয়” শ্লোকে শাস্ত্র প্রত্যক্ষ। প্রতি জীবন, প্রতি মুখ, প্রতিজ্ঞনের কার্য্য সব আলাদা; তারা আলাদা আলাদা জীবনে অভিজ্ঞতার ইতিহাস দিয়ে ভগবানের কাছে নৈবেদ্য করে এমন আলোক পায় যে, পথ খুঁজে পায়। এ বিষয়ে অনেকে সন্দেহ করিতে পারে। আমিও প্রথমে বিশ্বাস করিতে পারি নাই। এখন মৃত্যুর দরজার ভিতরের আলো এসে পড়েছে, কথা শুনে কথা মেনে চলার সঙ্গে দ্বন্দ্ব থেমে গেছে। জীবনকে উৎসর্গ করে, ভিতরে আঠা বাঁধে; মনের ভিতরে ফুটে উঠেছে এ সৌভাগ্যের কথা। সবাই পারে কিনা, সন্দেহ হতে পারে? তারাও পায়, তারাও পারে, এই বলার আমার অত্যন্ত আকাঙ্ক্ষা নিয়েই আমি এসেছি। জীবন চালনের পথ পেয়ে তাদের জীবনও ধন্য হয়ে যায়।

দুর্বল শরীর, আমার সাধ্য নাই। আরো বলবার আছে, কিন্তু বলে ফুরিয়ে উঠা যায় না। হয়তো এ সাহস আমার ধৃষ্টতা; কিন্তু

প্রবল বেগ এসেছে আমার এই কথা বলে যেতে । আজ উৎসবে  
এঁরা যে আমায় স্মরণ দিয়েছেন, সেজন্য কৃতজ্ঞতা জানাচ্ছি ।  
আর যাঁর অমৃতময় পূণ্যস্মৃতি বৃকে করে এখানে এসেছি, তাঁকে  
প্রণাম করি ।

ধর্মতত্ত্ব—১৬ ফাল্গুন, ১৩৪৩ সাল । ( February 28, 1937 )

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সাহিত্য-সম্রাট স্বর্গীয় বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায় মহাশয়ের  
প্রণীত ধর্মতত্ত্ব—প্রথম ভাগ অনুশীলন  
১২৯৫ সালের সংস্করণের ১৩২  
পৃষ্ঠা হইতে উদ্ধৃত

“শিষ্য । অর্থাৎ বৈদ্য কেশবচন্দ্রসেনের ব্রাহ্মণ শিষ্য ; ইহা  
আপনি সঙ্গত মনে করেন ?

গুরু\* । কেন করিব না ? ঐ মহাত্মা স্মরণের শ্রেষ্ঠ গুণে  
সকলে ভূষিত ছিলেন । তিনি সকল ব্রাহ্মণের ভক্তির  
যোগ্য পাত্র ।” †

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\* এখানে গুরু যাহা বলিতেছেন তাহাই বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের নিজের মত ।

† পরবর্তী সংস্করণে উপরোক্ত অংশটী বাদ দেওয়া হইয়াছে ।



সাধারণ ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের প্রবীণ সভ্য ও “নব্য ভারতের”  
সম্পাদক স্বর্গীয় দেবীপ্রসন্ন রায়-চৌধুরী প্রণীত “দীপ্তি”  
(অগ্রহায়ণ ১৩০৯) নামক গ্রন্থের “সেকালের এবং  
একালের ব্রাহ্ম” প্রবন্ধ হইতে উদ্ধৃত—  
(উক্ত গ্রন্থের ৭৮—৮১ পৃষ্ঠা দেখুন)

( মাঘ, ১৩০৪ সালে লিখিত )

মহাত্মা রাজা রামমোহন রায়ের মূলমন্ত্র ছিল, উদারতা এবং  
ধর্ম-নিরপেক্ষতা। এই উদারতা এবং ধর্ম-নিরপেক্ষতার স্বর্ণে এ  
দেশে অমৃত ফল ফলিয়াছিল। দেবেন্দ্রনাথ, রামতনু, রাজনারায়ণ,  
সেই উদারতা এবং নিরপেক্ষতার ফল। এই সকল মহাজনেরা কি  
করিয়াছেন, কি দেখাইয়াছেন অল্পাধিক পরিমাণে অনেকেই জানেন,  
স্মরণ্য বিবৃতির প্রয়োজন নাই। ইহাদের সংস্পর্শে এবং চরিত্র  
ছায়ায় মহাত্মা কেশবচন্দ্রের উদয়। কেশবচন্দ্রের উদয় এবং  
ব্রাহ্ম-ধর্মের চরমোন্নতি, একই কথা। তাঁহার জীবন এবং  
সকল ধর্ম সমন্বয় একই কথা। তিনি বিশ্বজনীন উদারতা  
এবং স্বাধীনতার মহাসম্মিলন সংঘটন করিয়া যে দৃষ্টান্ত  
রাখিয়া গিয়াছেন, তাহা বুদ্ধিতে বহু যুগ লাগিবে। তাঁর  
জীবনাদর্শে কলিকাতার প্রতাপচন্দ্র, গৌরগোবিন্দ, ত্রৈলোক্যনাথ,  
উমেশচন্দ্র, শিবনাথ প্রভৃতি এবং মফঃস্বলের আরো অনেক মহাজন-  
দিগের অভ্যুদয় হয়। শেষে কি কুক্ষণে এবং কি অলক্ষণে যে বিদ  
পোকা ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে প্রবেশ করিল, ভাবিতে শরীর রোমাঞ্চিত হয়।  
শিবনাথ এবং আনন্দমোহন উদারতায় ধর্মাদিপত্যের বিভীষিকা  
দেখিয়া, স্বাধীনতা, বনাম স্বৈচ্ছাচারিতার নিশান হস্তে লইয়া  
কলিকাতার রাস্তায় অবতরণ করিলেন। কুচবিহার বিবাহ অনুকূল  
হইল—প্রতিবাদ ও আন্দোলন উঠিল। প্রতিবাদ ও আন্দোলনের

অর্থ অবাধ পরনিন্দা। চতুর্দিকে বিঘোষিত হইল, বড় ছোট, স্ত্রী মূর্খ, ভক্ত অভক্ত সবাই সমান, সকলেরই এক ভোট। ভোটবাদিগণ দলে দলে জুটিলেন। স্বাধীনতার নামে স্বৈচ্ছাচারিতার অসংযত ও উচ্ছৃঙ্খল সমালোচনা প্রবাহ বহিতে লাগিল! কখন দেখি, কেহ “স্বলভ সমাচারকে” পদ দ্বারা মর্দন করিতেছেন, কখন দেখি, কেহ কেশববাবুর নাম মৃত্তিকায় অঙ্কিত করিয়া পাতুকা দ্বারা আত্মপদে সহকারে মর্দন করিতেছেন! সে সকল রণিত কথার উল্লেখ করিতেও দুঃখে হৃদয় অবসন্ন হয়। এই রূপে মহাজন নিন্দার গরল উঠিল। বুনি বা সেই পাপের ফলে এখন ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ ভুগিতেছেন।

ক্রমে সাধারণ ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইল, উপাসনার প্রকাণ্ড মন্দির উঠিল। ইহার টুটুভিঙিতে লিখা আছে, কোন ব্যক্তি বা কোন ধর্মের নিন্দা এই মন্দিরে হইবে না। কিন্তু স্বকর্ণে শুনিয়াছি, এই মন্দিরে বিজয়কৃষ্ণ\* আনন্দ করতালি তুলিয়া কেশবচন্দ্রের নিন্দা ঘোষণা করিয়াছেন। রামকুমারের সহিত এই সময়ে কয়েকবার মফঃস্বলে ভ্রমণ করিয়াছিলাম, তখন দেখিয়াছি, তাঁহার মুখে অল্প কথা নাই, কেবল কেশববাবুদের নিন্দা। প্রতিদিন এজ্ঞ বহুবার তাঁহার সহিত বিবাদ করিতাম। সাতবৎসর পরে তিনি স্বীকার করিয়াছেন, নিন্দা করিয়া অপকর্ম করিয়াছিলেন। নিন্দা-পাপের প্রায়শ্চিত্ত করিবার জ্ঞান কি না, কে জানে, বিজয়কৃষ্ণ এবং রামকুমার ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ পরিত্যাগ করিয়া নব নব সাধন-পথ আবিষ্কার করিয়া দল বাঁধিয়াছেন। নিন্দা যখন মানুষের মূলমন্ত্র হয়, হিংসা এবং ক্রোধ তাহার আশ্রয় লয়। প্রতিহিংসা এবং ক্রোধ ক্রমে ক্রমে ব্রাহ্ম হৃদয়ে এমন বন্ধমূল হইতে লাগিল যে, ধর্ম, উদারতা, ধীরতা, সঙ্কীর্ণতা, পূণ্য পবিত্রতা, সংসাহস ক্রমে ক্রমে পলায়ন করিতে

\*স্বর্গীয় বিজয়কৃষ্ণ গোস্বামী মহাশয় ( জটীয়াবাবা ) সাধারণ ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের তখনকার প্রধান প্রচারক ছিলেন।

†স্বর্গীয় রামকুমার বিদ্যারত্ন, সাধারণ ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের অগ্রতম প্রচারক।

লাগিল। এ কথা যখন পত্রিকায় ঘোষিত হইতে লাগিল, তখন লাইবেল (Libel Case) কর, এই মূল মন্ত উঠিল। আমি লিখিব কি, লজ্জায় মরিয়া যাউ, নিন্দা করল পান করিয়া যে সকল মহাজন-দিগের অভ্যুদয় হইতেছে, তাঁহাদেরই অনেকেরই না আছে চরিত্র, না আছে ধর্ম, না আছে সংসাহস, না আছে পুণ্যের জোর। তবে আছে কি ? ভীকৃত্য, কাপুরুষতা, পাপম্পৃহা, অহঙ্কার, হিংসা, বিদ্বেষ, বিলাসিতা, প্রতারণা, প্রবঞ্চনা, আত্মস্তুম্বিতা এবং এবম্বিধ অশেষ গুণরাশি। এক সময় এমন ছিল, যখন এদেশের লোকেরা ব্রাহ্মের নাম শুনিলেই শ্রদ্ধা করিত, আর এখন ? এখন ব্রাহ্ম নাম শুনিলেই সকলে কর্ণে অঙ্গুলি দেয়। ইহার কারণ কি ? কারণ কি কিছুই নাই ? ব্রাহ্ম বলিলেই এখন অনেকে বুঝেন, যে ব্যক্তি ধর্মের পোষাক পরিয়া প্রতারণা করিতে পারে, যে ব্যক্তি অন্ত্রের নিন্দা দ্বারা নিজের সহস্র দোষ ঢাকিতে পারে, সেই ব্রাহ্ম। কি ছুঃখের কথা। মহাত্মাদিগের মহত্ব স্বরণ ও চিস্তনে মানুষ্যের মহত্বের উদয় হয়। নিন্দা-কীর্ত্তনে আত্মা কলুষিত হয়, চরিত্র নমিত হয়। নিন্দা-বিষপানে ব্রাহ্ম সাধারণের কি অপকার করিয়াছে, যাহারা চিন্তাশীল, তাঁহারা বুঝিতে পারিবেন।

প্রতি ব্যক্তিই সমান, বড় ছোট, জ্ঞানী মূর্খ, সাধক অসাধক, ভক্ত অভক্ত, সকলেই সমান, সকলেরই এক ভোট ! স্বাধীনতার এমন বিশাদ ব্যাখ্যা কেহ কখনও শুনিয়াছ কি ? স্বাধীনতার মহাকেন্দ্র ইংলণ্ডেও ক্রুতী ও পণ্ডিত লোকের আদর, বুদ্ধ ও বুদ্ধিমানের আদর সর্বাপেক্ষা অধিক ; আর এখানে সবাই সমান ! চরিত্রবান্ শিবনাথ আর অগঠিতচরিত্র আমি সমান ! তাঁহারও এক ভোট, আমারও এক ভোট ! ত্রিশ-বৎসর-ব্যাপী সাধনার ফলে যে উমেশচন্দ্রের অভ্যুদয় হইয়াছে তাঁহাকে অষ্টাদশ-বর্ষ-বয়স্ক নবীন-যুবক-ব্রাহ্ম ভোট-সমতায় আজ অনায়াসেই উড়াইয়া দিতেছে ! দিতেছে, দিক। ফল হইতেছে কি ? কেমন ব্রাহ্ম সকল উৎপন্ন হইতেছেন ? কেমন প্রচারক সকল দেখা দিতেছেন ? লিখিব কি, যেন চরিত্র-হীনতার মহামেলা মিলিয়াছে। সয়তানে সয়তানে কোলাকুলি হইতেছে,

চরিত্রহীনে চরিত্রহীনে মিলন হইতেছে, তারপর একদল অগ্রদলের  
 বাপান্ত করিয়া মহাকীর্তি প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিতেছেন। ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে  
 কোন সংকাজ যে না হইতেছে এমন নহে, সংকাজের তুলনায়  
 অসংকাজের নোকাই গুরুতর হইয়া উঠিতেছে ; ঝগড়া এবং বিবাদ,  
 অন্তর্কলহে সমাজ ডুবিতেছে। পূর্বে দিনয় ছিল ব্রাহ্মের প্রধান লক্ষণ,  
 এখন বিলাস তৎস্থান অধিকার করিয়াছে। পূর্বে অমায়িকতা ও  
 মধুরতা ছিল ব্রাহ্মের অঙ্গের ভূষণ, এখন আত্মস্তুতি এবং অহং-  
 সর্বস্বভাব সে স্থান অধিকার করিয়াছে। পূর্বে বিশ্বাস এবং ভক্তি  
 ছিল ব্রাহ্মের একমাত্র অন্ন জল, এখন সম্মান, কুল-গৌরব, টাকা ও  
 পদ-মর্যাদা সে স্থান গ্রহণ করিয়াছে। পূর্বে সেবা, চরিত্র, অনুরাগ,  
 প্রেম, সত্য ও জ্ঞানপিপাসা ব্রাহ্মের বিশেষত্ব ছিল, এখন প্রশংসা-  
 পিপাসা, হিংসা ও স্বার্থ সকল সং গুণের স্থান অধিকার করিতেছে।  
 পূর্বে অন্তের মহত্ব স্বরণ এবং চিন্তন ব্রাহ্ম-জীবনের মহত্ব লাভের  
 একমাত্র অবলম্বন ছিল, সেই স্থলে এখন পর-নিন্দা, পর-চর্চা শোভা  
 পাইতেছে। আর সর্বোপরি অনুদারতা সংক্রামক ব্যাধির ত্রায়  
 ঘরে ঘরে বিচরণ করিতেছে। পৃথিবীর আর সকলেই নগ্ন, সকলেই  
 পতিত, সকলেই চরিত্রহীন, কেবল এ ধরায় ব্রাহ্মই একমাত্র  
 নোক্ষের অধিকারী ! এইরূপ অহঙ্কার ছোট বড় সকলকে আক্রমণ  
 করিয়া সর্বনাশ করিতেছে। তুমি হিন্দু, তোমার ছায়া মাড়াইলে  
 ব্রাহ্মের পতন হয়, কেন না, তোমার রুচিবোধ নাই, তুমি পৌত্তলিক।  
 তুমি খৃষ্টান, তোমার ধারে বসিলেও ব্রাহ্মের অকল্যাণ হয়, কেন না  
 তুমি উপদ্রব মানিয়া চল। হায়, হায়, হায়, এইরূপ করিয়া অহঙ্কার  
 ব্রাহ্ম-শিশুদিগকে বধ করিতেছে। আমি শতমুখে বলিব, অহঙ্কার ও  
 সাম্প্রদায়িকতা শিক্ষার মূল বিদ্যালয় ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ। ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে  
 নিন্দুকের আদর সর্বাপেক্ষা বেশী। ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ এখন নিন্দুকের দলে  
 পরিপূর্ণ। নিন্দা-বিষে ব্রাহ্মসাধারণ জর্জরিত।

এই সকল কথা ভানিলে সেকালের একালের ব্রাহ্মের পার্থক্য  
 বুঝা যায়।



# BOOKS AND JOURNALS

Navavidhan Church

## I.—Keshab Chandra Sen's Works.

*English —*

1. True Faith.
2. The Missionary Expedition.
3. Essays, Theological and Ethical.
4. Discourses and writings.
5. Prayers, Pts. I and II.
6. The New Dispensation, Pts. I and II. (The Religion of Harmony).
7. Lectures in England.
8. Lectures in India.
9. Yoga (Subjective and Objective).
10. The New Samhita.
11. Diaries in Ceylon, England.
12. Tracts.

*Bengali—*

- ১ ব্রহ্মগীতোপনিষৎ
- ২ ব্রাহ্মিকা দিগের প্রতি উপদেশ
- ৩ জ্ঞান প্রতি উপদেশ
- ৪ স্ত্রী পরিবার
- ৫ প্রচারক গণের সভার নির্ধারণ
- ৬ দৈনিক প্রার্থনা ( কমলকুটার )
- ৭ ঐ ( ভারতাস্রম ইত্যাদি )
- ৮ হিমাচলে প্রার্থনা ( ১ — ৩ খণ্ড )
- ৯ মাঘোৎসব
- ১০ সাধুসমাগম

- ১১ সেবকের নিবেদন (১ — ৫ খণ্ড)
- ১২ জীবনবেদ
- ১৩ আচার্যের উপদেশ ( ১ — ১০ খণ্ড )
- ১৪ প্রার্থনা ( ব্রহ্ম মন্দিরে )
- ১৫ সঙ্গত । ( ১ — ২ খণ্ড )
- ১৬ অধিবেশন
- ১৭ উপাসনা প্রণালী
- ১৮ নবসংহিতা
- ১৯ পরিচারিকা ব্রত
- ২০ বিশ্বাস ও ভক্তিয়োগ

*Journals started —*

1. Indian Mirror (Fortnightly, 1861) (daily, 1871).
  2. Sulava Samachar (সুলভ সমাচার) (Bengali) (1870).
  3. Sunday Mirror (1873).
  4. The Liberal and New Dispensation.
  5. Dharmatattwa ( ধর্মতত্ত্ব ) (1864).
  6. বালক বন্ধু
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**II—Works on Keshab Chandra by Different Writers.**

1. আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্র (Acharya Keshab Chandra about 2400 pages) by Upadhya Gour Gobinda Roy.
2. The Life and Teachings of K. C. Sen—by Rev. Pratap Cnandra Mazoomdar.
3. কেশব চরিত (Life of Keshub —by Trailokya Nath Sanyal.
4. Keshab Chandra—A study—by Promotho Lall Sen.

5. কেশব কাহিনী—Roy Moti Lal Das.
6. কেশব স্মাগম Do. Do.
7. আশাচন্দ্র কেশবচন্দ্র—By Mrs. H. Takada.
8. Keshab Chandra and Ramkrishna—by G. C. Banerji.
9. Keshab Chandra Sen—by Gour P. Mazumdar.
10. K. C. Sen—Some correct statements and disputed facts—by Girish Chander Sen.
11. ব্রহ্মানন্দ কেশবচন্দ্র—by P. N. Malik.
12. Brahmarshi Keshab Chandra Sen—by Mani Lal Parekh.
13. A Century of Progress—A History of the Faith and Progress of the Brahmo Samaj and the Navavidhan (in preparation)—by Dr. P. K. Sen, Bar-at-Law (late Judge, Patna High Court).
14. Life of Keshab (Sindhi).
15. Life of Keshub Chandra Sen (in Urdu)—by Raghunath Singh.
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32. Keshub Chandra and Ramkrishna—by G. C. Banerji.
33. Brahmananda Kesav—Life and Works—by Dr. Prem Sunder Bose
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  46. Glimpses from the Life of Keshub Chunder Sen—by Gouri P. Mazumdar.
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### **III—Books Written, Edited and Published by G. C. Banerji.**

1. Keshab as Seen by his Opponents.
2. Keshab Chander and Ramkrishna.
3. Brahmananda Keshab Chandra Sen in Testimonies in Memoriam, Vols. I and II (compiled).
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5. বিষয় নির্ঘণ্ট সূচী
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